



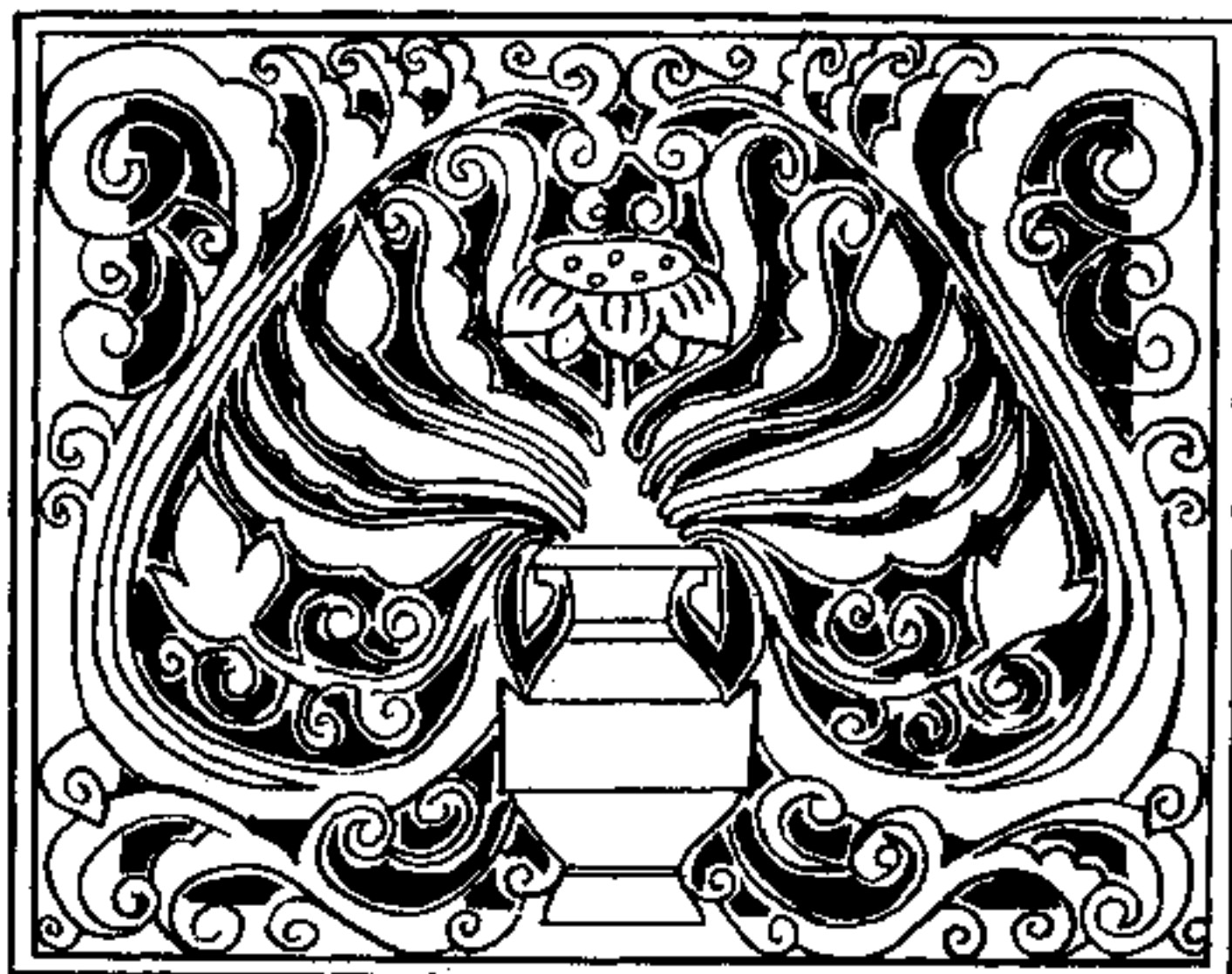
Prabuddha Bharata

or Awakened India

VOL. 99

FEBRUARY 1994

ISSN 0032-6178



PRABUDDHA BHARATA

A Monthly Journal of the
Ramakrishna Order
Started by Swami Vivekananda in 1896

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P.O. Mayavati, Via Lohaghat
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Publication Office
5 Dehi Entally Road
Calcutta 700 014

Phone (91)(33)244 0898
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Rates of Subscription (inclusive of postage)

		Annual	Life (30 Years)
India	Rs.	30	Rs. 500
Sri Lanka & Bangladesh	Rs.	120	Rs. 2000
U.S.A. & Canada			
<i>Surface Mail</i>	\$	20	\$ 300
<i>Air Mail</i>	\$	35	\$ 600
Other Countries			
<i>Surface Mail</i>	£	15	£ 225
<i>Air Mail</i>	£	25	£ 375

Cover: *A view of the Himalayas*

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उत्तिष्ठत
जाग्रत
प्राप्य
वरान्निबोधत



PRABUDDHA BHARATA

ARISE! AWAKE! AND STOP NOT TILL THE GOAL IS REACHED.

VOL. 99

FEBRUARY 1994

No. 2

DIVINE WISDOM

The Supreme Duty of Man

स वै पुंसां परो धर्मो यतो भक्तिरधोक्षजे।
अहेतुक्यप्रतिहता ययाऽऽत्मा सम्प्रसीदति॥

The highest duty of man consists in doing that which generates devotion (Bhakti) to the Supreme Being—devotion which is motiveless, which is unyielding to any obstacle, and which fills the heart of man with peace after erasing all the body-based instincts and tendencies.

वासुदेवे भगवति भक्तियोगः प्रयोजितः।
जनयत्याशु वैराग्यं ज्ञानं च यदहेतुकम्॥

Devotion to Vāsudeva quickly generates abhorrence for sensual life and bestows the transcendent knowledge which is beyond the grasp of logical controversies.

वदन्ति तत्तत्त्वविदस्तत्त्वं यज्ज्ञानमद्वयम्।
ब्रह्मेति परमात्मेति भगवानिति शब्दयते॥

The Supreme Truth to be sought after, is described by enlightened ones as Non-dual

Consciousness. It is variously called Brahman (by the Vedāntins), Paramātmā (by the votaries of Hiraṇyagarbha), and Bhagavān (by the Bhaktas).

तच्छ्रद्धधाना मुनयो ज्ञानवैराग्ययुक्तया।
पश्यन्त्यात्मनि चात्मानं भक्त्या श्रुतगृहीतया॥

The contemplatives endowed with faith, renunciation and other virtues leading to enlightenment, discover the Spirit in themselves through devotion generated and strengthened by the hearing and studying of the scriptures.

अतः पुंभिर्द्विजश्रेष्ठा वर्णाश्रमविभागशः।
स्वनुष्ठितस्य धर्मस्य संसिद्धिर्हरितोषणम्॥

Hence, O holy one, the attainment of the grace of Śrī Hari is the true end of the proper discharge of duties, sacred and secular, ordained according to the Varnāśrama social system.

From the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*

Parliament of Religions—An Appraisal

The Prevailing Conditions

Nineteen ninety-three was very special for the followers of Vedanta and Swami Vivekananda. Some 400 functions were organized to commemorate the centenary of Swamiji's participation in the World Parliament of Religions, 1893. Of these about thirty were held in western countries and the rest in India. The most important of all these were two—the one held in Chicago, from 28 August to 4 September, and the other in Calcutta on 11, 12, 18, and 19 September.

These need an appraisal. What did these functions into which had gone so much hard labour of love and hope achieve? Will these have any appreciable influence on the prevailing world-situation? While trying to find answers to these we had better keep in mind what are happening around the world right now, at least the most depressing events—repulsive resurgence of religious fundamentalism in India and abroad, some fifty wars raging, most of them originating from and sustained by religious hatred; epidemic corruption, AIDS, drug-addiction, hunger in Somalia and Ethiopia, racism, exploitation of and discrimination against women, violation of human rights, various forms of environmental depredation, and so on from an endless list reflecting individual and collective human helplessness, hopelessness, and meanness.

The Parliament of 1893

Before confronting these questions we should evaluate the achievements of the 1893 Parliament also. Adding to the above list of human follies all the catastrophies that mankind has suffered since 1893, that Parliament, from one point of view, had no

significant impact on the later events of the twentieth century, except in a very small way in the field of religion alone! For example, it took some seventy years from 1893 for interreligious dialogues to even begin. And even then the participants were wary during the first few interactions. In one such gathering held in Madras in the early 1970s, the very last sentence of the concluding remarks of the President of the function was something to this effect: 'We invited you all and sat together to hear about your respective religions, not because we accept your religions as true, but because every devil must be given his due'! And it took another two decades for that tone to change.

In America itself, which first thought of and organized so well the 1893 Parliament, it was only about twenty-five years ago that the ban on Native Indians from practising their traditional religion was lifted. In any case, it is gratifying to see that interreligious dialogues and inculturation processes have gained momentum in recent years.

Again, two of the most important progressive achievements of the twentieth century—the painfully slow containment of unabashed racism, and the gradual alleviation of the condition of women—are the sweet fruits not of the Parliament, but of secular democracy and other political compulsions. Also, take the case of the conflict between open modern scientific knowledge and closed traditional faiths. How slow and difficult, and in some countries impossible, have been the attempts to rationally harmonize the two. This conflict perhaps is at the root of all the other human problems, and a majority of the educated have come to regard religions as irrelevant so far as social

or national life is concerned.

Its achievements

Was then the 1893 Parliament an utter failure?

No. There were some unexpected and unintended rewards from that great event: for the first time in its history the modern world was presented with the rich religious diversity among mankind; for the first time the world heard of Vedanta, a universally valid and progressive system of thought and practice which was spiritually satisfying, which as Swamiji presented it could effortlessly accommodate, in fact encourage, scientific knowledge as well, and which like no other religion had Man, not God, as central to its structure; and, above all, the Parliament served as a platform for a Prophet to deliver this message of Vedanta.

So, that Parliament was an unlimited success for these last two things if not for anything else. Those who had the privilege of hearing Swamiji, and also coming into personal contact with him found that Vedanta:

i. provided an 'alternate religion' to those who earnestly wanted religion, but who were utterly dissatisfied with their traditional extra-cosmic anthropocentric religion, and that it did not take them away completely from their own religion, but only deepened and supplemented their faith with reason, and laid down that God-realization or Self-realization is the goal of faith;

ii. gave meaning and direction to individualism, to man's irrepressible desire for freedom in thought and action;

iii. provided a very stable basis within

themselves to anchor their individuality while vigorously participating in a world rapidly changing under the impact of scientific discoveries;

iv. revealed the real foundation of democracy, morality, and ethics;

v. expressed logically and powerfully what they had always felt to be true but could not articulate—that man is essentially divine, not a sinner; and

vi. lifted their vision—at least a few experienced this—far above temporal concerns to the reality of Advaita.

These are some of the ways in which the Parliament, through Swamiji, showered its

...Vedanta focuses on and is concerned with the evolution of man's self-perception, which cannot be hurried.

immediate benefits on a small portion of mankind. It is difficult to identify any other *universally relevant* constructive

and destructive event, just after or even during the last 100 years since 1893, which can be proved to be a direct fallout of that Parliament.

Evidence of longterm gains

Since it was the Parliament that served as a gateway for Vedanta and Swamiji to the West, from a larger perspective we may include Swamiji's other obvious and not-so-obvious achievements during his stay in the West after the Parliament also as its rewards. The 'obvious' ones such as forming study-groups of people deeply interested in Vedanta, which later grew into Vedanta Societies, his lecture tours, etc. can be found detailed in his printed biographies. The 'not-so-obvious' ones are the powerful ideas that he released, the universal relevance and the layered implications of which will unravel only as decades and centuries pass, and mankind matures slowly after passing through one crisis after another in spite of its expanding knowledge. For, Vedanta focuses on and is concerned with the evolu-

tion of man's self-perception, which cannot be hurried.

A review of the last one hundred years discloses, though very faintly, this long range relevance of Vedanta. Isn't it wonderful and fully satisfying that these days a good number of deeply religious people, defying religious fundamentalism, are identifying themselves as 'Hindu Vedantins', 'Islamic Vedantins', 'Christian Vedantins', 'Jewish Vedantins', and so on? The number of people from all cultures, races and traditional faiths, and even those who had turned away from religion to material sciences alone, now turning to Vedanta as Swamiji taught it has increased. Those who after their adolescent preoccupation with food, sex, excitement, and adventure are now deeply hungering for a meaning to their lives, for something to fill the vacuum in their inner being; those who have found it impossible to harmonize their own anthropomorphic and theocentric religions with the education-given scientific knowledge, individualism, and freedom for creativity; who have begun to feel themselves to be like rudderless and anchorless boats in the shoreless ocean of information and knowledge; who are feeling fragmented and self-alienated by the rapid changes in the world; those trying to develop a holistic attitude towards existence; those who are just beginning to realize that all attempts so far to bring peace and harmony to mankind through political, economic and other sciences have failed for not having first understood Man fully—these form the cross-section of people now being drawn to Vedanta, 'the Religion of Hope'.

Parliament of 1993: Achievements

The Parliament of Religions, 1993, has amply borne this out. For,

i. from its beginning to end there was not one attempt to project any particular religion as superior or true; it was pervaded by the spirit of universal harmony and may as well be called the 'Parliament of World Religions Under the Umbrella of Vedanta';

ii. some speakers were frank and courageous enough to condemn fundamentalism in their own religion;

iii. the number and the cross-section of the participants were clearly indicative of the increasing interest in the 'Alternate Religion of Vedanta', the 'Religion of Hope, Strength, Fearlessness', which amongst other things was refreshingly free of clergy;

iv. the free and open manner in which the followers of various faiths mingled showed that in them too had awakened the

Vedanta is the 'Religion of Hope, Strength, Fearlessness'.

spirit of Sri Ramakrishna, to whom the different religions were like so many windows of the man-

sion of human consciousness opening out to the many-sided splendour of God;

v. the participation of educated people from a variety of professions showed that they were aware that Vedanta alone could rationally enrich their inner lives and complement their formal learning.

The extensive media coverage that these functions received must have put to shame those who were using religion to divide people and incite violence (the proponents of '*mauvaise foi*' of 'one true way'), and made the enlightened people consider them religious quacks!

Three of the important achievements of the Parliaments of 1993 are: They focussed the attention of the world on Vedanta much more extensively than in 1893; they provided a meeting ground for people from different parts of the world who are devoted to Vedanta; and they demonstrated that Vedanta can bring together people of

different religions, cultures, and races in a spirit of acceptance, not mere tolerance, of diversity in creation.

Follow-up for results

To have been more effective these Parliaments could have passed a few resolutions, got them signed by all the participants and as many as possible of admirers of Vedanta who could not personally attend, and had them sent to the topmost leaders of the major religions of the world, saying something like this:

We request you all:

i. to issue a fiat publicly to the clergy and followers of your esteemed religions that they should forthwith desist from abusing other faiths in public or in private.

ii. to meet together to identify the common features of your religions and proclaim it to the world.

iii. to identify in your respective religions the universally relevant insights and practices that are in harmony with scientific knowledge and enlightened individualism. These could then be put into the format of a book. As many governments as possible can then be persuaded to introduce it into schools as a compulsory part of the syllabus.

iv. to build up public opinion to persuade governments to legislate that the

Media must reserve a reasonable portion of their time and channels for projecting also the nobler aspects of man in real life.

Were this to have fructified, then we could certainly have expected to see in our own lifetime perceptible improvements in the world on all the fronts.

In any case, beneficial changes are bound to occur. The coming of Prophets never goes in vain. As seeds wait for the right conditions to germinate, the thought-energies of these great men wait until man has sufficiently evolved mentally through various struggles so as to be able to assimilate and work out the potency of those thoughts. Swamiji himself has said that it took two hundred years after Lord Buddha for a large portion of mankind to rise to astonishing heights of prosperity, culture, learning and wisdom. Similarly, we too are sure that Swamiji's Vedantic thoughts also, so widely and earnestly appreciated during the 1993 Parliaments by an unprecedented number of people the world over, stand patiently waiting for the appropriate maturing of Man.

For Swamiji was a lover of Man and had immense faith in his potentialities.



In man alone is the Ātman most manifest, for he is the best endowed with intelligence. He articulates what he understands, he actualizes what he understands. He knows what can happen tomorrow. He can discriminate between the desirable and the undesirable objects of enjoyment. More, he aspires to achieve immortality through mortal things. He is thus endowed (with so many capabilities). In contrast the entire attention of the other creatures is, surely, on hunger and thirst alone.

(Aitareya Āranyaka, II.iii.2-5.)

Madhusudana Saraswati on the Bhagavad-Gita

TRANSLATED BY SWAMI GAMBHIRANANDA

The previous issue contained Madhusudana's Introduction to the Gītā. This time we have given his Dīpikā (Annotation) on verses 10 to 13 of Chapter 2 which he has entitled, 'An Aphoristic Presentation of the Whole of the Gītā.'

The Lord did not become indifferent towards Arjuna even though he had thus abandoned the battle. Hence, for removing the vain hope of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, he (Sanjaya) said:

तमुवाच हृषीकेशः प्रहसन्निव भारत॥
सेनयोरुभयोर्मध्ये विषीदन्तमिदं वचः ॥ (2.10)

*Tamuvāca hr̥ṣīkeśaḥ prahasanniva bhārata
senayorubhayormadhye viṣīdantamidam
vacaḥ*

*O descendent of Bharata, to him who was
sorrowing between the two armies,
Hr̥ṣīkeśa, mocking as it were, said these
words:*

Tam, to him, to Arjuna; who having come prepared for battle was becoming, *madhye*, in the midst; *senayor ubhayor*, of the two armies, overpowered by delusion in the form of sorrow which was opposed to that (preparedness); *hr̥ṣīkeśaḥ*, Hr̥ṣīkeśa, the Lord, the internal Ruler of all; *prahasanniva*, mocking as it were, drowning him in a sea of shame, as it were, by exposing his improper behaviour; said *idam vacaḥ*, these following words, '(You have grieved) for those who are not fit to be grieved for,' (etc.), which had a very profound meaning and which exposed his improper conduct. But He did not ignore him. This is the idea.

'Mocking' means putting one to shame by exposing his improper behaviour. And shame is indeed painful; so mockery

primarily relates to something disdainful. But since Arjuna was an object of the Lord's grace, and since the exposure of improper behaviour was meant for arousing (Arjuna's) discrimination, therefore this mockery is in a secondary sense because one of its aspects is absent here. *As it were* is used to express this. The improper behaviour of Arjuna is exposed by the Lord for arousing discrimination, just as (in other cases) it is done for arousing shame. However, whether or not shame arises as an invariable consequence (after mockery) is not the intention (of the Lord). This is the idea. Indeed, had he shunned the battle while at home itself, before the battle was begun, then he would have done nothing improper. But it is highly improper to shun the battle after reaching the battlefield with great zeal. The qualifying words, 'between the two armies', etc. are used for expressing this. And this will become clear in, '(You have grieved for) those who are not to be grieved for,' etc.

As to that, although Arjuna's urge to engage in his own (caste-) duty, called fighting, had arisen spontaneously, still it became obstructed by two kinds of delusion, as also by sorrow that had them as its cause. So his delusion of two kinds has to be dispelled. Of these two, the one which is common to all beings is in the form of the appearance of mundane existence, even though it is unreal, as true, natural to the Self, etc.; (this appearance is) on the Self—which is by nature self-effulgent, supreme Bliss, and untouched by all the attributes of

mundane existence—owing to non-discrimination of the three limiting adjuncts, viz. the two gross and subtle bodies, and their cause called ignorance. The other is that which is personal to Arjuna only and results from such defects as pity, and which consists in one's own duty, called fighting, appearing as unrighteous since it abounds in injury etc. Thus, the remedy for the first, for all in common, is the realization of the pure nature of the Self by distinguishing the three limiting adjuncts (from the Self). However, the remedy for the second is a personal one, consisting in understanding that though fighting involves injury etc., still unrighteousness is absent in it since it is one's own duty. As for sorrow, however, since it is dispelled through the removal of its cause itself, therefore there is no need of any separate means. Having this in mind,—

श्रीभगवानुवाच।

Śrī bhagavānuvāca: The Blessed Lord said, referring successively to the two errors:

अशोच्यानन्वशोचस्त्वं प्रज्ञावादांश्च भाषसे।

गतासूनगतासूंश्च नानुशोचन्ति पण्डिताः॥ (2.11)

Aśocyānanvaśocastvam prajñāvādāṃśca bhāṣase

gatāsūnagatāsūṃśca nānuśocanti paṇḍitāḥ

You have grieved for those who are not to be grieved for, and you speak words that are unfit to be uttered by the wise! The wise do not grieve for the departed and those who have not departed.

Tvam, you, though a learned person; *anvaśocaḥ*, grieve, have grieved; *aśocyān*, for those who are not to be grieved for, those whom it is verily improper to grieve for—(i.e.) for Bhīṣma, Droṇa, and others including yourself, by having said, '...seeing these

relatives...' (1.28) etc., which conveys the idea, 'They die because of me. Becoming separated from them, what shall I do with enjoyment of kingdom etc.' And thus it is improper for a very learned person like you to commit the error of grieving for those who are not to be grieved for, as is common to animals and so forth. This is the idea. *Ca*, and; similarly, from My words, '... whence has come to you this impurity' (2.2) etc., though you got the idea, 'This act of mine has been improper', still you yourself, even though learned, *bhāṣase*, speak; *prajñāvādān* (*prajñānām avādān*), words that are unfit to be uttered by the wise (*prajñā*)— '... how shall I fight ... in battle against Bhīṣma' (2.4) etc.; but you do not become silent out of shame! The word *ca* (and) is used to indicate, 'What can be more improper than this!' The idea is, 'And so it does not befit you, who are very learned, to have personal wrong notions of considering what is unrighteous as righteous, and what is righteous as unrighteous.'

Or (the explanation is): *Bhāṣase*, you speak, but do not understand; *prajñāvādān*, the words of the wise.

Since grieving is earlier in time as compared with speaking, therefore it is indicated as a past event. On the other hand, since the *speaking* as a succeeding event is not remote, therefore it is used in the present tense. Or the explanation should be made by a change of tense (in *anvaśocaḥ*, you have grieved) to '*anuśocasi*, you grieve' in the present tense, as a scriptural peculiarity.

Is it not that mourning for the departure of friends and relatives is not improper, since it was resorted to even by such illustrious persons as Vasiṣṭha?

In anticipation of this He says, '*gatāsūn*, for those whose vital forces have departed,' etc. Those who are *paṇḍitāḥ*, wise, possessed

of the knowledge of the Reality of the Self arising from deliberation; *na anuśocanti*, do not grieve for those whose vital forces have departed and those whose vital forces have not departed, i.e., for the bodies that are imagined to be friends and relatives. They do not become deluded by thinking, 'What will these do and where will they stay who have died, departed, leaving behind all the accessories of subsistence? And how will these living ones survive after being separated from friends and relatives?' For, during the time of Self-absorption, these (thoughts) do not appear in the mind, and during the time of emergence (from Self-absorption), even though these (thoughts) do appear, they are known for certain to be unreal. Indeed, when the erroneous perception of a snake (on a rope) is removed as a result of the knowledge of the reality that is the rope, there is no possibility of fear, trembling, etc. due to it. Or, again, for a person whose organs have been affected by biliousness, should there occur at any time even an experience of bitterness in molasses, there can be no inclination towards it when he desires something bitter; for the certitude about sweetness (of molasses) is strong. Thus, since the erroneous idea that they are to be grieved for arises from the ignorance of the true nature of the Self, therefore when that ignorance is removed by the knowledge of Its true nature, how can the erroneous idea that they are to be grieved for, which is an effect of that (ignorance), persist? This is the purport.

As for Vasiṣṭha¹ and others, however,

1. Vasiṣṭha, binding his hands and feet, had tried to drown himself in a river when all his sons were devoured by a demon! However, the bonds snapped and he survived. That river came to be known as Vipāśā (free from bondage), modern Beas. When he tried a second time in another river, it divided itself into a hundred currents, and so he was saved! And this river came to be known as Śatadru, the modern Sutlej.

their various actions, performed in conformity with the predominance of the results of past tendencies that produced their bodies, does not make them fit to be performed by others on the ground of their being actions of the noble ones, because only those actions of the noble ones as are productive of supermundane results and are undertaken with the idea that they are virtuous are (to be accepted as) such actions (that deserve emulation). Otherwise, there arises the contingency of (their) spitting etc. also having to be followed! Thus it is to be understood. So the idea is, 'Since this is so, therefore you too, becoming wise, do not sorrow.'

The elaboration of this—'You have grieved for those who are not to be grieved for,'—is being made in nineteen verses (2.12-30) beginning with, '*Na tveva*, but certainly (it is) not (a fact) ...,' and (the elaboration) of this—'and you speak words of the wise'—is made in eight verses beginning with, 'Even considering your own duty' (2.31), because the two kinds of delusions have to be removed by (two) different efforts. As to that, He establishes the eternality of the Self with a view to distinguishing It from the gross body:

न त्वेवाहं जातु नासं न त्वं नेमे जनाधिपाः।
न चैव न भविष्यामः सर्वे वयमतः परम्॥ (2.12)

*Na tvevāhaṃ jātu nāsam na tvam neme
janādhīpāḥ
na caiva na bhaviṣyāmaḥ sarve vayamataḥ
param*

*But certainly (it is) not (a fact) that I did not
exist at any time; nor you, nor these rulers of
men. And surely it is not that we all shall
cease to exist after this.*

The word *tu*, but, indicates distinction from the body etc. : Just as it is *na eva*, cer-

tainly not (a fact); that *aham*, I; *na āsam*, did not exist; *jātu*, at any time before the present, but, on the contrary, I did indeed exist; similarly, *tvam*, you also (did exist). And *ime*, these; *janādhīpāḥ*, rulers of men, did surely exist. By this it is shown that the Self is not a counter-correlative (*pratiyogī*) of an antecedent non-existence (*prāg-abhāva*).² So also, *na*, it is not; *vayam*, we; *sarve*, all—I, you, and these rulers of men; *na bhaviṣyāmaḥ*, shall cease to exist; *ataḥ param*, after this; but, on the contrary, we shall certainly exist. Hereby has been declared that the Self is not a counter-correlative (*pratiyogī*) of (non-existence caused by) destruction (*dvamsa*). Hence, since the Self is eternal on account of Its remaining associated with Existence in all the three times, therefore Its distinction from the impermanent body stands established.

Is it not that the materialists say, 'This Self is nothing but a body endowed with consciousness. And thus the validity of such direct experience as, "I am fat", "I am fair", "I move", etc. will remain uncontradicted. So, how can there be a distinction of the Self from the body? Even if there be a distinction, how, again, can there be (its) freedom from birth and death, since it stands to reason that the Self also has birth and death together with the birth and death of the body. For there are such experiences as, "Devadatta is born", "Devadatta is dead"?'?

Anticipating this the Lord says:

देहिनोऽस्मिन् यथा देहं कौमारं यौवनं जरा।
तथा देहान्तरप्राप्तिर्धीरस्तत्र न मुह्यति॥ (2.13)

*Dehino'sminyathā dehe kaumāram
yauvanam jarā
tathā dehāntaraprāptiḥ dhīrastatra na
muhyati*

As are boyhood, youth and decrepitude to an embodied being in this (present) body, similar is the acquisition of another body. That being so, an enlightened person does not get deluded.

Dehī, an embodied being, is one who has all the bodies—past, future, and present—that exist throughout the world. Since activity in all the bodies can be justified on the ground that the very same Entity is associated with them due to Its pervasiveness, therefore there is no proof for multiplicity of the Self corresponding to each body. The singular number (in *dehinah*) is used for implying this. But the plural number in *sarve vayam*, we all (in verse 2.12), is in accordance with the earlier mention of multiplicity of bodies; (it is) not from the idea of multiplicity of the Self. So there is no fault.

Yathā, just as; *dehinah*, to that embodied being, which verily remains the same; there come *asmin dehe*, in this present body; these three mutually contradictory states, *kaumāram*, boyhood; *yauvanam*, youth; and *jarā*, decrepitude;— but (there comes) no multiplicity of selves as a result of those differences, since there is a firmer recognition, 'I who had perceived my parents in boyhood, that very me am perceiving grandchildren in (my) old age', and since an impression formed in somebody else cannot produce recollection in another—, *tathā*, similarly, in that very way; to the very same Self which remains unchanged, there comes about *dehāntara-prāptiḥ*, acquisition of another body, acquisition of a body that is totally different from the present body. For, though in dream and in a case of power of Yoga there may occur a perception of

2. According to Nyāya philosophy the non-existence of an effect, for instance a pot, before its production is termed *prāg-abhāva* (of the effect). And the pot is said to be a counter-correlative of that. The Self has no *prāg-abhāva*; It is not a product.

differences in those bodies,³ still there is the recognition, 'I am that very one.' Accordingly, if the body itself were the Self, then as the bodies differ according to the differences of boyhood etc., there would not have occurred the recollection (of self-identity): But, on the other hand, following the maxim, 'A thing persists so long as its recognition lasts', if one should say that in spite of the fact that the states of boyhood etc. are entirely different, there is the identity of the body that is the basis of the changes, even then there should not have been the recognition (of self-identity) when the substrata, the bodies, acquired in the state of dream and through the power of Yoga are different. Hence there are two illustrations. Therefore, like the awareness of water etc. in a mirage, in a desert, and so on, the idea, 'I am fat', etc. also have surely to be admitted to be erroneous; for the ideas are equally negated in both the instances. And this will be elaborated under, 'Never is this One born...', (2.20) etc. Hereby is also refuted the view that the Self which is different from the body originates along with the body and gets destroyed with it. For, though awareness (of self-identity) be justified in a case of difference in the states (of the same substratum, e.g., body), still (that) awareness is not possible when the substratum, the body, is different.

Or: *Yathā*, just as it is the very same changeless Self that acquires the states of boyhood etc.; *tathā*, similar; is (Its) *dehāntara-prāptiḥ*, acquisition of another body when It leaves this body. For, though in that case there is no awareness (of self-identity) in the form, 'I am that very one', still the experiences of joy, sorrow, fear, etc. resulting from earlier impressions are evident in a newborn child. Otherwise there would not have

been the propensity to suckle and so forth, because it is admitted that such actions originates from the awareness that they are conducive to what is desirable, etc., and that they originate only from the results of past actions. Thus is established the identity of the Self in the earlier and later bodies; for, otherwise there would arise the contingency of *kṛtanāśa* and *akṛta-abhyāgama*. This has been elaborated elsewhere. *Kṛtanāśa* means the loss of acquired merit and demerit without their being experienced. *Akṛta-abhyāgama* means the fruition of unearned merit and demerit without a why or wherefore.

Or: As in you, who verily continue to remain the same embodied Self, there occurs no difference when birth and death as states of the body follow successively, since you are eternal, similarly, since you are all-pervasive, therefore even the simultaneous acquisition of all the other (new) bodies occurs in relation to you alone who remain the same. For, if the Self has an intermediate size (between all-pervasiveness and minuteness), then, being constituted by parts, It cannot have eternality; and should it be minute, then there would arise the contingency of Its not experiencing joy etc. occurring to the body as a whole. When the Self is determined as all-pervasive on the ground of perception of Its activity (for instance, experience of sorrow, happiness, etc.) in all the bodies, then the definite conclusion is that you are, indeed, the one Self in all the bodies.

Tatra, this being so, you become deluded on account of being overwhelmed by imagining the distinction that someone is to be killed and another is the killer. But, *dhīraḥ*, an enlightened person; *na muhyati*, does not get deluded; for (in him) there is the absence of such a perception of difference as, 'I am the killer of these, these are to be killed

(Continued on page 110)

3. In dream and through the power of Yoga bodies different from the present one are experienced. Still, the awareness of self-identity in the form, 'I am that very one', persists.

Ideal Behind Ramakrishna Mission Activities*

Swami Bhuteshananda

Revered Maharaj, President of the Ramakrishna Order, points out that work performed in the right spirit—in the spirit of Yoga, leads to salvation and Ultimate Goal of life.

The report on the working of the Ramakrishna Mission for the last year along with a brief reference to the activities of the Math Centres has been presented to us. The report shows the amount of work that the Mission is carrying on in spite of all the difficulties our country is passing through. This work is sufficiently burdensome for the Organization in its present capacity. But with your help and cooperation — the dedication of the monastic workers and our lay friends — the work is going on more or less smoothly, though we feel at every step that difficulties are increasing day by day. I believe our work is satisfactory considering the amount of difficulties we face. Behind this work there is one unfailing strength, and that is the inspiration of the great originators of our movement — Swami Vivekananda and his Master, Sri Ramakrishna.

However we have to be careful not to forget the ideal that inspires us in this work. We have to remain faithful to the ideal; then only has the work its value by spiritual considerations. Ours is a spiritual organization and in it the spiritual ideal is not dissociated from the secular services it carries on, because according to our ideal, nothing is secular — everything is spiritual. Whatever the Mission is trying to do is for the service

of human beings who are to be looked upon as embodiments of Divinity. That is the ideal placed before us and we have to be alert always and careful that we are carrying on this work without budging an inch from this ideal set before us by Ramakrishna-Vivekananda. That ideal has to be our guide always.

It is not the amount of work that is done that matters so much as the spirit with which it is done. We have to analyze our own selves frequently and see that we are doing the work faithfully according to the ideal. The spirit of service amounts to the worship of God in man — this has to be borne in mind. This has to be the standard by which the activities of the Mission are to be judged. Ours is not a social service organization. It is an organization with the ideal of attaining our spiritual uplift through service to humanity. The twin ideals: *Ātmano Mokṣārtham, Jagaddhitāya ca*, “for the liberation of one’s own Self and the service of the world” should be our guiding motto; without that our work has no value. Then alone can we claim to be the workers of the Mission and the followers of Swami Vivekananda’s command. Others might judge our work by its volume, but we should judge ourselves with reference to the ideal we have before us — whether we are faithful to it, and whether the work is really a spiritual service and not merely a sort of social service. In our case, social activity comes as a by-product; the main thing is spiritual activity and we should aim to work

* Chairman’s Address given by Most Revered Srimat Swami Bhuteshanandaji Maharaj, President of the Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, before the 81st Annual General Meeting of the Ramakrishna Mission held at Belur Math on 23 December 1990.

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Inaugural Address Of Sri P.V. Narasimha Rao Prime Minister Of India

Text of the address he delivered at the Talkatora Indoor Stadium on 9 October 1993 while inaugurating the centenary celebration commemorating Swami Vivekananda's participation in the Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in 1893.

I feel honoured to have the opportunity to address such a distinguished gathering as this and to inaugurate the centenary celebrations of Swami Vivekananda's participation in the Chicago Parliament of Religions.

Nearly a year ago, in the closing days of 1992, I had the good fortune to speak at a similar gathering in Kanyakumari on the centenary of Swami Vivekananda's *Bhārat Parikramā* and his Chicago Addresses. While inaugurating the Rashtra Chetana Varsh on that occasion, I had put to myself and my audience one question, 'How can we relate the truly liberal vision of Swami Vivekananda to the dissemination of Rashtra Chetana in our country today?'

This question becomes all the more relevant, all the more pressing, compelling today because there is a deliberate attempt to show Swami Vivekananda exactly as what he was not, exactly as the opposite of what he was. He is sought to be depicted as a fanatic himself. Nothing could be farther from truth. No worse travesty of truth could be imagined and nothing could be a worse disservice to spirituality in general and Swami Vivekananda in particular than what has been attempted in the last one or two months. I don't have to give details; it is well known. So, now we have not only to learn about Swami Vivekananda, know Swami

Vivekananda, it has fallen to our lot to save Swami Vivekananda—this is the situation today—, save him from being communalized; save his ideas from being completely distorted and misinterpreted; and save him from being shown as someone whom humanity will no longer be interested to remember. This is the danger I find today before us.

The answer, I know, was not easy then and it is not easy now. But its urgency remains as I have just explained. A closer look at the life and teachings of Swami Vivekananda and a deeper understanding of our own society will help us move towards an answer or an approximate answer; we don't have exact answers to anything in life.

When we think of Swami Vivekananda, we think of a man who was in continual search of truth and universal understanding. The spiritual Order of Ramakrishna, named after his illustrious guru, thus has as its goal not only salvation through meditation, but also finding God in the service of the suffering human beings. We know the Ramakrishna Mission and the work of the Mission too well not to understand this, not to appreciate this very important aspect of the Mission. Wherever there is calamity, wherever there is need, you will

find the Ramakrishna Mission present, perhaps reaching there earlier than anyone else. So, the missionary spirit of the Ramakrishna Mission is the first thing that attracts anyone as its most important characteristic. They are silently working, and working wonders. They have not sought for any publicity—that is the difference—a Mission with a difference.

Ramakrishna Paramahansa and his disciple Swamiji represent the eternal soul of India. Swamiji's Chicago Addresses had a profound impact because it revealed for the first time, succinctly but eloquently, the soul of India to an audience which knew little of India and thought less of it. We all know about the penury that the young man Narendra Nath Dutta had to go through. As a young man, he found it difficult after the death of his father to provide for his family. Yet the daily sufferings did not discourage this man from embarking on his journey in search of truth. It is this passion which took him from one guru to another till he met Ramakrishna, who could give an answer to his simple but very difficult question, 'have you seen God?'

It is this search for truth which inspired him to undertake the *Bhārat Parikramā*, which gave him a firsthand experience of the Indian reality, her material poverty co-existing with her spiritual richness. I still say that the best educator in India is India herself. A person who is confined to his own state or his own district or his own village is what they call '*koopmandook*'; let him get out of it, see India—leave alone the world—in all its vividness. That is why the institution of *Vānaprastha* and the institution of monks—the missionaries going from place to place, not because they are simply wanting to move, but because in that movement there is so much of education. So these institutions, this tradition in India, was founded with a view to widening the

horizons of man. That is how Swamiji started on a *parikramā*, and I have no doubt that, great as he was, he learnt, he must have learnt, a great many things from this *parikramā*.

Swamiji was a product of the renaissance period of Bengal. The rumblings of reformation were already being heard and protests against moribund religious rituals were taking different forms. We have had so many reformers in India. I don't know what would have happened without them. They have been applying correctives from time to time. The entire literature of the *sādhus* (monks), of even those amongst them who came from humble background, gave a message which was so forceful that it transformed the society of their times. These are the people who have been the controllers of Indian Society. There is something flying in the air, and you sit in a control-room applying whatever corrections are needed, pressing buttons, adjusting things, so that it is on course, it doesn't get out of course, it doesn't wobble out, it doesn't tumble out. That is what they did, these great reformers—Kabir, Dādu, Dayāl—all these people from different parts of India. This is how the self-correcting mechanism in our culture, in our religion, in our spirituality, has been functioning and the greatest of the correctors was Swami Vivekananda. He was amongst the greatest ones. Sometimes it was the Young Bengal Movement, in which young men looked towards the West for salvation. Sometimes it was breaking away from the Hindu religious mainstream and forming a new religion like 'Brahmoism', shorn of day-to-day Hindu rituals. However, one of the strong ingredients of the renaissance movement was its social aspect. That is why Kabir said:

*Jāt na pūchho sādhu kī, pūchh lījiye jñān
mol karo talwār kā, paḍī rahan do myān.*

(Don't ask a sadhu his caste; but look to his knowledge—
So, value a sword by its steel, not by its scabbard.)

What simpler and more graphic description of these empty rituals can we find? —very simple language, extremely effective in its impact.

It was in Swamiji that the ancient and the modern met perfectly. Guru Ramakrishna, a self-taught man without much formal education, represented the distilled wisdom of the Indian civilization. He symbolized the quiet, unostentatious wisdom of India which recognizes the essential plurality of the paths that can lead us to Truth. He recognized that the goal while one is in search of Truth is the realization of Self (Ātman), for this is the final stage in the long process of enlightenment.

It should be very obvious, even to a child, that the world is not moulded—that mankind is not moulded—in one way only. There are so many faces, so many natures, so many voices. On the telephone you can tell whose voice it is at the other end. The quality of the voice is so different from person to person. Everything is different from person to person. There are no two things identical—no two men or women identical in this world. This is how God's creation is. Can we not understand this simple truth that in spite of all this variety, we are all human beings? What is so difficult in the understanding of this? Water can start from anywhere, but ultimately whatever is left reaches the sea —'*Ākāśāt patitam toyam yathā gachhati sāgaram*' (Just as the rainwaters falling from the sky reach the ocean). I can easily trace the course of the water

We have had so many reformers in India... They have been applying correctives from time to time. Kabir, Dādu, Dayal... and the greatest of these correctors was Swami Vivekananda.

falling from the eaves of my house in my village to the Bay of Bengal ! Where does this water go? From one tank to a second, to a third tank, then to the last tank, and finally to the Godavari, and lastly into the Bay of Bengal ! This is how it is ! This way of understanding variety would be very easy if only we could remove the prejudices that have unfortunately grown in us—from childhood itself in many cases. Instead of prejudice, some kind of tolerance should be nurtured in people, which is what our tradition always teaches, always taught us. But somehow, over the years, over the past centuries, that teaching seems to have

evaporated and given place to something which is based on hatred, looking down on others, or on other religions, on other traditions, and

so on. Once this hiatus comes, there is no end of it. This hiatus can and does lead to utter anarchy eventually.

It is this aspect of the Indian civilization that Swamiji projected before the West. As he said in his very first address in Chicago and people heard from this young Swami Vivekananda there: 'We believe not only in universal toleration, but we accept all religions as true.' If we accept all religions as true, then why are you quarreling? What is the idea? Is this a tournament? Life is something serious. You agree on certain things and say—this is equal to that; therefore that should be equal to this. Then why is it that these walls are being raised? Why is it that in the name of religion so much of irreligiosity is being perpetrated on mankind, and particularly in India where it should never happen? Swamiji was underlining the essence of Indian civilization. Swamiji's idea of universal toleration can be best understood from his own words:

I shall go to the mosque of the Mohammedan; I shall enter the Christian's church and kneel before the crucifix; I shall enter the Buddhistic temple, where I shall take refuge in Buddha and in his Law. I shall go into the forest and sit down in meditation with the Hindu, who is trying to see the Light which enlightens the heart of every one.

Now, what is the difficulty, what is the *Jhagda* (quarrel) about? We can go everywhere. I don't think there is any place of worship which prohibits people going there. It is not a question of going, the question is, what do you get from there? You can go to a church, you can go to a *gurudwāra*, but what do you get from there? What is the motivation you get? If that motivation is one of equality of all religions, one of choosing the essence, taking the essence and leaving the non-essentials, then there should be no problem.

This aspect of '*Sarva-Dharma-Samabhāva*', which we call secularism today, equal respect for all religions, is a unique contribution of our country to the world. It is amazing that people cannot understand secularism. There may be different religions in other countries, but still, from their point of view, it is an aggregate of different religions. From our point of view, it is not an aggregate, it is not an arithmetical aggregate—one plus one plus one. Our idea is not like that; it is something much above the idea of 'aggregate', and that is what we consider secularism. Our secularism is neither atheistic nor irreligious. It is not even indifferent to religion. It accepts religion as a vital element in the life of an individual, for so it is in India and among the vast

majority of the people of the world. It then goes a step further and recognizes, in the spirit of the long-held Indian tradition, that there can be more than one true religion and all of them should be shown due deference. This deference is as much to God—who, we realize in our own humble way, can be worshipped in more ways than one—as to the dignity of the individual whose freedom of thought, belief, faith and worship is an essential part of his freedom and equality with others.

Religion is always perceived as a living entity that grows and develops with the times—its spiritual and metaphysical content by constant intellectual discourse and meditation, and its social aspect by the changes in the physical environment around us.

Ramakrishna Mission has performed a major nation-building task by spreading the message of Swamiji, particularly among the children and youth. Youth is idealistic and energetic. That is the time for dreams and aspirations. Our achievements in our later years are closely linked to the way we utilize our time when we are young. Swamiji was only thirty when he addressed the Parliament of Religions, and his life has been an inspiration for generations of Indians and others. Probably it was the young Vivekananda alone who could address this Chicago convention the way he did. May be, if it had been an older person, his phraseology and everything else would have been different and not so impressive. Swamiji will continue to be inspiring for many more generations. He represents the eternal youth of India.

Swamiji's contribution was not merely in the spiritual field. He did not merely present and interpret India's religious wisdom to the world. He was a man who influenced religion as much as religion influenced him. He was a man for change. He was an activist. Social reform is an intrinsic part of his message. The parallel with Mahatma Gandhi

cannot go unnoticed here. Their deep religiosity did not make them blind to the need for change in several social and ritualistic aspects of religion. In this again they were in the long standing Indian tradition, dormant at times, but never dead. Religion is always perceived as a living entity that grows and develops with the time—its spiritual and metaphysical content by constant intellectual discourse and meditation, and its social aspect by the changes in the physical environment around us.

Swamiji's social zeal adds to his relevance to us today. His religion was 'Service to the Daridranārāyāna'—i.e., service to suffering humanity. It was not pity that prompted him to serve the needy. It was his way of serving God. The whole philosophy of *Karma Yoga* was brought into focus by Swami Vivekananda in a way that people could understand. Serve mankind in whatever way you can, he seemed to say; without any ulterior motive. That is the surest way to attain Truth.

Such inspiration has always motivated our young men and women to come out to help whenever there has been any crisis, be it famine, or war, or earthquake. It is this sense of service that has taken organizations like the Ramakrishna Mission to every corner of the world whenever any calamity has caused suffering. Swamiji revived for us this human dimension of religion. We have to nurture this revival and promote it further.

As we remember this great man today, let us recall the last few words that he spoke in the Parliament of Religions. He said:

Holiness, purity and charity are not the exclusive possessions of any church in the world. Every system has produced men and women of the most exalted character. How challenging these words were in the Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893! It can only be imagined. Today they may look very common. Everyone repeats these words. But, for him to have gone to far-away America, to Chicago, and said so, in this challenging fashion, is something absolutely marvellous. We are not even able to imagine the real magnitude of it. And he said:

...In the face of this evidence, if anybody dreams of the exclusive survival of his own religion and the destruction of others, I pity him from the bottom of my heart, and point out to him that upon the banner of every religion will soon be written, in spite of resistance: 'Help and not Fight', 'Assimilation and not Destruction', 'Harmony and peace and not Dissension'.

I think you cannot call to mind a more relevant, a more apt statement than this from today's point of view, leave alone a hundred years ago. So it seems he was able to think of something which will be relevant always. The proof is that it is equally relevant a hundred years *after* he said it.

I have great pleasure in inaugurating the Centenary Celebrations of Swami Vivekananda's Participation in the Chicago Parliament of Religions. I congratulate all those involved in these Celebrations and wish them every success.



'The destiny of the human race, as of the individual, depends on the direction of its life forces, the lights which guide it, and the laws that mould it.'

—Dr. S. Radhakrishnan in *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, page 2.

How I Came to Know of Vivekananda

I first read Vivekananda in 1968 while studying psychology in graduate school. At that time I was studying Freud, Maslow, Jung, Rogers, and many other Western psychologists. I was trying to forge their insights into something I could practise in my own life and use to help others in my professional role. I was not having much luck. To me these writers were long on theory, but short on advice for living a truly fulfilling life.

A fellow student who knew I was interested in Eastern philosophy suggested I read Vivekananda's *Karma Yoga*. To those who have studied Vivekananda, I hardly need say more. His insight into the mind, his depth of analysis, his passion for Truth, his singleminded striving for the highest realization, and his absolute clarity of expression answered my needs. His advice to me then, and now is: seek God; work, but give up the results, and don't look back. Since then, no matter how discouraged I get (i.e., how sorry I feel for myself), one paragraph of Vivekananda's will put me on the right track.

There are many of Swamiji's quotes that I love, but the best is: 'May I be born again and again and suffer thousands of miseries so that I may worship the only God that exists, the only God I believe in, the sum total of all souls: and, above all, my God the wicked, my God the miserable, my God the poor of all races, of all species, is the special object of my worship.'

Merv Wingard

From 'What Swami Vivekananda Means To Me'

The Vedanta Society of Portland,
Oregon, USA

Karma Yoga: Key to All the Yogas

ROBERT P. UTTER

What is Yoga or union with God, and what is the best means to its attainment? In this deeply thoughtful article the author shows how carrying into action (karma) all the noble ideas of the other Yogas—Jñāna, Bhakti, and Dhyāna (meditation), one can progress more quickly towards the Ideal. Mr. Utter is a Vedānta devotee of Pleasanton, California, U.S.A.

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Karma Yoga is the yoga which transforms selfish action into selfless action. All action is by nature selfish because we are, in our ego-bound state, selfishly attached to all results of action and even to the action itself, as in various habits of behaviour in which we do something "just to be doing it," or "because we have always done it."

It is easy to see that everyone has to practise Karma Yoga if his spiritual life is to be a success, because everyone lives in the world of action, that is, the world of the body-mind-ego complex. Since this complex is made up of the finite body, the finite mind, and the self-centred and finite ego, we can see that finite actions for finite goals are always going on or are in the making. Therefore the only way to spiritualize life, to make ourselves conscious of the Infinite and desirous of the Infinite only, is to practise action as a yoga of unselfishness if we are to escape the rounds of births and deaths. Even those who are between lives, that is, have died out of one body and have not yet entered into another one, are still feverishly active in subtle form, for they are eagerly remembering actions of their past lives and are planning more in their next incarnation. Even those who are sleeping are still active in dreams, or if they are in dreamless sleep they are ready upon awakening to spring into more action again. There is only one way to escape the prison walls and manacles which action locks us into, and that is

through Karma Yoga.

Only the sage in *nirvikalpa samadhi* is beyond action, for he is one with *Nirguṇa Brahman*, the highest Absolute, the Spinless Spinner of the ages and galaxies, the Universal Ground of all Creation, and yet in Itself totally beyond all movement or change or causality. All others below such a sage and such a supreme level of Godhead are engaged in some kind of action, however subtle and indiscernible it may be. The realm of action is all-pervasive below the level of the highest Attributeless Brahman.

This means just one thing: every being below the highest Absolute is within the world of action and must practise Karma Yoga to escape the manacles of time and space and all relative living. We often forget this truth in our zeal to master the letter of the law, and by doing so we tend also to forget the spirit of spiritual practice, which is to overcome and rise above the ego. We tend to parrot the words and often forget to apply them to ourselves.

Thus God also, as Creator-Preserver-Destroyer of the world, demonstrates the necessity to practise Karma Yoga. Sri Krishna, speaking as the God of the World, says to Arjuna:

"I have, O Pārtha, no duty; there is nothing in the three worlds that I have not gained and nothing that I have to gain. Yet I continue to

work.

"For should I not ever engage, unwearied, in action, O Pārtha, men would in every way follow in My wake.

"If I should cease to work, these worlds would perish....

"As the ignorant act, attached to their work, O Bhārata, so should an enlightened man act, but without attachment, in order that he may set people on the right path....

"All work is performed by the guṇas of Prakṛti. But he whose mind is deluded by egotism thinks, 'I am the doer'." ¹

Thus it is clear that the Creator God acts as the perfect Karma Yogi, as an example to all beings, without any attachment whatsoever to the work or its results. It should be clear that if even God the Creator has to act, then all human beings have to act; they will be compelled simply by the active aspect of their physical and mental being (*prakṛti* or nature); so since we all have to act, we must practise Karma Yoga to reach the Infinite. We spiritualize our acts by offering the results to God instead of aggrandizing them for ourselves alone. We thus offer our egos to God instead of feeding our egos with self-centred pleasures. Sri Krishna says in the *Gītā*: *"To work alone you are entitled, never to its fruit."*² By offering all results of work to God, we turn the mind

This worship of God in all by service is a new kind of Karma Yoga emphasized by Swami Vivekananda as especially appropriate for modern times which are characterized by feverish activity. It is indistinguishable from Jñāna Yoga and Bhakti Yoga....

Godward in every act we do. By doing this we practise renunciation of everything we gain by action. Karma Yoga is total renunciation, and it thus becomes, in effect, Jñāna Yoga.

The secret of Karma Yoga is not that it is a yoga of action per se, but that action becomes a yoga when it is selfless action. Since the ordinary motive for action is the results we reap from it, if we give up those results by offering them to God, we purify our minds by making them no longer seek ego-bound satisfactions. The ego is thus dissociated from our acts, which we then perform because they are impersonally the right thing to do, not because they strengthen the ego. When we do things for others instead of for ourselves, the boundaries between the ego and the outside world become less impenetrable, and we

open our finite self to the Infinite. No longer do we remain self-bound; we become instead God-oriented. Through renunciation of the results of our acts we become more like God, we dissolve ourselves

more and more into God. It becomes harder and harder to say where the path of Karma Yoga ends and the paths of Knowledge and Love begin. The offering of our acts to God becomes devotional worship of the Personal God; the serving of others through altruistic acts becomes more and more the seeing of God in everyone and everything. The yogas are really one because they lead to the same goal: the absolute union of the individual soul with the non-dual Godhead.

The secret of Karma Yoga is the complete giving up of the sense of the limited self and the desire for personal salvation and doing nothing but helping others. Swami

1. *The Bhagavad-Gītā*, Swami Nikhilananda, trans., (New York: Ramakrishna Vivekananda Center, 1944) Ch. III, 22-25, 27, pp. 113-15.

2. *Ibid.*, Ch. II, 47, p.88.

Vivekananda once said:

*"You will go to hell if you seek your own salvation! Seek salvation for others if you want to reach the Highest! Kill out the desire for personal Mukti! That is the greatest of all Sādhana's."*³

He also said in a letter:

*"I have lost all wish for my salvation....May I be born again and again...so that I may worship the only God that exists, the only God I believe in, the sum total of all human souls—and, above all, my God the wicked, my God the miserable, my God the poor of all races, of all species, is the special object of my worship."*⁴

This worship of God in all by service is a new kind of Karma Yoga emphasized by Swami Vivekananda as especially appropriate for modern times which are characterized by feverish activity. It is indistinguishable from Jñāna Yoga and Bhakti Yoga, for it consists in seeing God in all beings and serving them through selfless work. This is the highest stage of Karma Yoga, the culmination of it, in which we not only give up all results of actions, however petty, but offer up to God all desire for personal salvation in order to help others gain salvation. Thus we see that for Swami Vivekananda we cannot separate Karma Yoga from the quest for salvation, that is, we must renounce even personal salvation in order to efface all personal desires and completely transcend the ego.

2

We have seen that Krishna says that we mistakenly assume that we are acting, but that the truth is that it is *prakṛti* or nature which acts through the body and mind. In other words, when we seem to act, the real doer is nature, not the ego. The ego appropriates all the action which our material nature does. It is as if the bubble on the wave were to claim to rise and fall by its own efforts, when it is the wave that is rising and falling. But even the wave is not rising and falling; it is the ocean which on its surface assumes the wave motion, though the wave motion is illusory. Without the ocean there would be no rising or falling of waves, yet the ocean itself does not rise or fall. Where then is action? Who or what acts? Who is the doer of all that appears to be done? Is anything really done at all? When a spiritual teacher teaches, who teaches? When a Ramakrishna speaks, who speaks? These are profound philosophical enigmas which the Yoga of Action solves by enacting a ritual of offering all actions to God alone. Karma Yoga says that thinking all-by-itself will not necessarily bring about actual insight into the philosophy of Advaita Vedānta; thought alone, unconnected with any action on our part, may leave us reciting verbal formulas without any real change in our inward knowledge. Karma Yoga says that if we act out the total renunciation demanded by Jñāna Yoga, we shall be transformed into *jñānis* more readily and thoroughly than if we try to disconnect all action from our knowledge. The mystical knowledge by which we solve this enigma is the transcendental vision of non-dual Godhead, and it cannot be explained by the multiplicity of words and thoughts. By renouncing all actions and their results we travel towards eternal unity and away from actions which are multiple and transitory. We solve the enigma by gaining direct insight into eternal Truth, and detaching ourselves from the relative.

3. *The Life of Swami Vivekananda*, by His Eastern & Western Disciples (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1960) p. 630.

4. Swami Vivekananda, *Complete Works* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1954) Vol. V, p. 106.

This paradoxical enigma about what is action and what is inaction is stated by Krishna in the *Bhagavad-Gītā* as follows:

"He who sees inaction in action, and action in inaction, he is wise among men, he is a yogi, and he has performed all action."

"He whose undertakings are free from all desires and self-will, and whose works are consumed in the fire of Knowledge—he, by the wise, is called a sage."

"Giving up attachment to the fruit of action, ever content, and dependent on none, though engaged in work, he does no work at all."

"Free from desire, with body and mind controlled, and surrendering all possessions, he incurs no sin through mere bodily activity."⁵

This is one of the most fascinating and enlightening passages in all the *Gītā*. In it the paths of Jñāna and Karma Yoga meet and melt into one. The true sage may be outwardly active, yet since he offers all his acts to God and ceases to desire anything, he becomes in effect actionless; for he is totally detached from everything he does and he therefore knows that God is acting through him. Selfless work thus becomes the wind that blows away the clouds that hide the Sun of Knowledge. Such a sage becomes a source of illumination for others. Just before this passage, Krishna describes Himself as follows:

We can now see that according to Krishna the true meaning of 'action' is attachment to the fruits of action, and the true meaning of 'inaction' is freedom from all desires for any results of action. Krishna taught the whole philosophy of Advaita Vedānta in teaching Karma Yoga.

"Action does not defile Me; nor do I long for its fruit. He who knows Me thus is not bound by his action."⁶

The ideal karma yogi may be said not to act by virtue of the fact that he desires no results of his actions at all and thus is not in the least affected by anything that he does. He is completely free from any consequences of his acts. Knowing full well that he desires nothing from his acts, he does not feel that he has done anything. No results of his acts cling to him at all. This is true "inaction in action."

On the other hand, if we are lazy and try to avoid action, we do not avoid action, for, as long as we live in the body and mind we must act. But we can try to avoid disagreeable actions. People in whom *tamas* or inertia predominates try to avoid as much action as possible and thus may appear to be "inactive," but in reality they are caught in a web of desires for bodily satisfactions with as little effort as possible. This hidden state of unfulfilled desires is a seething nest of anti-social actions that may burst out at any

time like the eruption of a long-dormant volcano, or a hive of bees or a breeding-ground of snakes when disturbed. Such a *tāmasika* person has no love for anyone but himself and cannot be altruistic in

his actions. He is hypocritical and deceptive, pretending to harmlessness when all the time he may be plotting all kinds of anti-social behaviour. The usually heroic Arjuna was temporarily under the influence of *tamas* at the opening of the *Bhagavad-Gītā* when he refused to fight, giving all kinds of apparently high-minded reasons for his

5. *The Bhagavad-Gītā*, Ch. IV, 18-21, pp. 132-34.

6. *Ibid.*, Ch. IV, 14, p. 130.

refusal. But Krishna knew that he was overcome by confusion and cloudiness of mind out of fear of the impending battle. Krishna urged him to fight, knowing that the only way to overcome *tamas* was to plunge into energetic action to drive away the clouds of *tamas*. This state of *tamas* is what Krishna meant by "action in inaction." Anyone may be overcome by *tamas* for any reason at any time, and when a person is thus overcome he must use Karma Yoga to get himself out of the state of "action in inaction" by offering all his acts to God and thus moving toward the state of "inaction in action."

We can now see that according to Krishna the true meaning of "action" is attachment to the fruits of action, and the true meaning of "inaction" is freedom from all desires for any results of action. Krishna taught the whole philosophy of Advaita Vedānta in teaching Karma Yoga. He changed Arjuna from his *tāmasika* state of self-preservation to a *sāttvika* state of self-sacrifice for the good of others. From a shirker overcome by doubt and fear, Arjuna became a heroic soldier ready to die for his cause. By offering the fruits of his acts to God he became a devotee of God as well as a worker for God. Karma Yoga becomes all the yogas as Krishna teaches them.⁷

3

But the path of Karma Yoga was not taught only by Krishna. It was also taught by Buddha, and it was taught in an entirely different way. Instead of basing it on offering the results of one's acts to the Personal God, Buddha taught it as based on the doctrine of *anāttā*, or "no-self." He refused to discuss any abstract philosophy or theology; instead he simply taught that the self or individual ego does not exist. If the self is unreal, then it cannot take credit for any-

thing that is done in its name; therefore selflessness becomes a built-in principle of Buddhism. Instead of discussing the questions of the nature of God, self, soul, ego, Buddha taught instead that everyone should do good works out of compassion for all living beings, a completely impersonal motive based on a positive love for others, not of oneself. Swami Vivekananda called Buddha the greatest karma yogi. He said:

*"Let me tell you...about one man who actually carried this teaching of Karma Yoga into practice. That man is Buddha. He is the one man who ever carried this into perfect practice. All the people of the world, except Buddha, had external motives to move them to unselfish action....Buddha is the only prophet who said, 'I do not care to know your various theories about God....Do good and be good. All this will take you to freedom and to whatever truth there is.' He was, in the conduct of his life, absolutely without personal motives; and what man worked more than he? ...This man represents the very highest ideal of Karma Yoga."*⁸

Swami Vivekananda emphasized that Buddha was the only world teacher who did not use the personal God as a motive for practising Karma Yoga. Buddha said, rather, that we should work only because it is the right and selfless thing to do. Buddha's teaching included Right Thought, Right Speech, and Right Action, which means that the follower of Buddha must carefully consider whether each thought, spoken word, and act is true, right, appropriate, helpful, and non-injurious under the particular circumstances of its occurrence. Such meticulous examination and control of every thought, speech, and act is extremely difficult, to say the least, and it results in a self-rule never even approximated by

7. For a discussion of the three *gunas*, see *The Bhagavad-Gītā*, Chs. XIV and XVII.

8. Swami Vivekananda, *Complete Works*, 1965, Vol. I, pp. 116-18.

ordinary people. But it is intended to result in a control by the higher mind over the lower mind that is spontaneous and effortless and free from any kind of "self-consciousness." The purpose of this self-examination is to prevent ourselves from acting impulsively or selfishly. The self-centred desires must be checked and prevented from producing thoughtless acts. But the selfless reason must be trained so that it acts impersonally and spontaneously without any interference from the desire-bound ego. And since all speech and actions originate in thoughts, thinking carefully about governing our thoughts enables us to govern our speech and our acts at their source, the thinking mind. We thus learn total self-control and make it impossible for the ego, illusory as it is, to govern our lives.⁹

But although Buddha did not have a personal God in his system, he added another ingredient to take its place: love for all beings. All-absorbing and all-inclusive love for all beings is far more than mere consideration for others; it must be a constant, never-changing state of blissful love for all the countless beings in the universe. Buddha spoke of it in the most ardent and eloquent terms:

"As a mother, even at the risk of her own life, protects and loves her only child, so let a man cultivate love without measure toward all beings. Let him cultivate love without measure toward the whole world, above, below, and around, unstinted, unmixed with any feeling of differing or opposing interests. Let a man remain steadfastly in this state of mind all the while he is awake, whether he be standing, walking, sitting, or lying down. This state

*is the best in the world."*¹⁰

Thus we can see that for Buddha doing good to others means much more than external acts and superficial politeness; it means that every act must stem from a love that pervades the heart to its depth and height and breadth, and is consciously extended to embrace and enfold every creature in the universe. There is to be no end, wavering, or cessation of this universal love; it is to be ever-constant, unfailing, and lifelong; it is to fill every moment of the yogi's life without flagging or changing. For Buddha, Karma Yoga and Bhakti Yoga are one. Buddha's emphasis on universal love, his emphasis on right thought and right speech and right action, his emphasis on the doctrine of no-self made his teaching one of the most powerful teachings in the world.

We should note that Buddha's teaching about the practice of love for all beings is not that it is to be *our* enjoyment of God's love for us, as Jesus emphasized, or of anyone's love for us, but that it is rather our love for *others* that he describes as the best state of mind in the world. For Buddha it is *giving* love to others, not *receiving* love from others, that is the source of such joy. Thus, without any God to love us, Buddha makes our love for others the bedrock foundation of his teachings.

We should, however, also note that though Buddha himself had kept silent about God in his religious teachings, in later centuries popular Buddhism put God back in the form of Buddha himself. "No one could be a more all-loving Father-God figure than Buddha" came later in popular Buddhism all over the Orient. Like Jesus, Buddha became the ever-loved, ever-loving "Good Shepherd," often depicted, like Jesus, as carrying a lamb on his shoulders

9. *The Path of the Buddha*, Kenneth W. Morgan, Ed., (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1956) pp. 104-5.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 94.

because he once offered his own life in place of a lamb about to be sacrificed. Buddha's universal love for all beings became the means by which the loving All-Father was reinstated in Buddhism.

But Buddha had nothing to do with this. By leaving out both God and the self, Buddha taught his disciples complete self-reliance. "Work out your salvation with diligence," were his last words to his disciples. His godless and selfless Karma Yoga put all the burden of salvation squarely on the shoulders of each individual disciple. Only each individual disciple could save himself from the ego and its desires. For Buddha, salvation was to be attained through practical selfless action.

The goal of Buddha's teachings is called "Nirvāṇa," which means "extinction" or "cessation," but what this means Buddha never really explained. It would seem to mean the extinction of the belief in the self and the belief in the personal God, as well as the cessation of all action of both body and mind. But Buddha never discussed what Nirvāṇa meant except in purely negative terms. He compared it to being rescued from a raging fire, the fire being the fire of desires. It would seem clear, however, that Buddha attained perfect union with the Infinite and bestowed that experience upon others. But he never tried to explain it in words. He taught selfless actions of love and service, but the Goal was beyond action. However, he taught that we do not need God or the self to practise Karma Yoga or to work out our salvation.

Swami Vivekananda emphasized that Buddha was the only world teacher who did not use the personal God as a motive for practising Karma Yoga....

Buddha's teaching about the practice of love for all beings is not that it is to be our enjoyment of God's love for us, as Jesus emphasized, or of anyone's love for us, but that it is rather our love for others... it is giving love to others, not receiving love from others....

4

To work, yet not to be caught in the web of work, that is the secret. How to live in the world, to do our duties, whatever they may be, yet never to be enmeshed and bound by the work, that is the problem which Karma Yoga teaches us to solve. A spider catches its prey by a web of fine, sticky threads which are to the fly invisible. But the web of work

is not sticky; it is our desires that make us stick to our work. Karma Yoga overcomes those desires by teaching us to offer all the results of our work to God, and by doing so to remain unattached to anything in the world. The karma

yogi is unafraid of the world; he may be very active in it, yet his desires are not aroused for finite goals or objects, because he systematically renounces everything he works for. He thus learns to desire only God, or, in the case of the Buddhist, the welfare of others. Action becomes for him compatible with the inaction of the Actionless Absolute, of which the *Upaniṣad* says: "Though sitting still, it travels far; though lying down, it goes everywhere."¹¹ God-knowledge is revealed through Karma Yoga by the devotee's offering all fruits of action to God. Karma Yoga thus teaches us how to live in the world and yet not be of it in any way.

Karma Yoga also teaches that there is no work that is of itself evil or impure. What makes work impure is the selfish motive with which most people perform their work. Swami Vivekananda tells an interesting story illustrating this point in his book on

11. *The Upanishads*, Swami Nikhilananda, Trans., (New York: Harper & Bros., 1949) Vol. I, p. 142. (*Katha*, I.ii.21)

Karma Yoga. A young monk spent a long time in a forest practising yoga. As a result of this practice he gained some psychic powers but little spiritual knowledge. These powers made him arrogant and impatient. An old lady, who had developed deep spiritual insight through the practice of Karma Yoga, saw through his hypocrisy, and to teach him a lesson, sent the monk to another karma yogi who belonged to the lowest caste of all, that of hunters and butchers. This butcher gave the young monk a long discourse on the highest spiritual wisdom. The monk asked the butcher in astonishment, "Why is a sage like you doing such ugly, filthy work?" The butcher replied, "No duty is ugly, no work is impure. My birth placed me in these circumstances. I neither know your yoga nor have I become a monk; nevertheless, all you have heard has come to me through the unattached doing of the duty which belongs to my position."¹²

Thus we see that there is no work that is not sanctified by being performed in a selfless manner. Karma Yoga makes all work holy, and all workers who perform selfless work instruments of the Divine. The body and mind of the karma yogi thus become instruments of God which work out the Divine Will in the relative world. Karma Yoga is thus the practical method by which the selfishness of ordinary actions is transformed into selfless Divinity.

5

One does not have to be a monk or a nun to practise Karma Yoga, nor is there a rigorous schedule of rituals to follow. It is open to all, and no one needs to study

anything to practise it. It is open to all regardless of class, occupation, wealth, education, or ancestors. It is open to kings and beggars, talented and untalented, young and old, men and women, learned and illiterate—all can and must practise it to make spiritual progress. It is the path for everyone regardless of one's likes or dislikes, inner propensities, temperaments, natural inclinations, or spiritual achievements. There are no barriers whatsoever against anyone. No special objects must be collected, no special symbols need be used, no special hymns, prayers, mantras, texts, or recitations need be said or chanted or sung.

The whole world becomes the temple of the true karma yogi, ... his heart becomes the altar, his love for all beings is the fire that transforms every act into God-Knowledge.

No special clothes need be worn, no special acts need be performed, no special places need be visited, no special people need

be sought out. One simply uses whatever conditions happen to be present at any given time. To the true karma yogi all persons, places, things, and acts are equally holy if all actions are offered to God. The whole world becomes the temple of the true karma yogi, and all people, places, things, and acts are equally divine. His heart becomes the altar, his love for all beings is the fire that transforms every act into God-Knowledge. The karma yogi merges with the bhakti yogi and the raja yogi. He is all love, all knowledge, and all concentration in his selfless action performed with total love for others, total oneness with God, and total concentration on God. His body is God's body, his heart is God's heart, his mind is God's mind. He is totally consecrated to God through selfless work. He does not have to offer special things to God. He just offers his every act. That is enough.

As a mother bird spends all her time and energy feeding her young, so does the karma yogi spend all his time helping

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12. Swami Vivekananda, *Complete Works*, 1965, Vol. I, pp. 68-70.

Bhakti Poetry And Integration

DR. RAMA NAIR

Bhakti, says the author, is the most popular and efficacious mode of attaining Supreme Truth, and it has been one of the most powerful factors effecting the cultural and spiritual integration of the nation. Dr. (Smt.) Nair is a reader in English at Osmania University in Hyderabad.

Bhakti is derived from the Sanskrit root *bhaj*, meaning 'to serve'. The *Bhāgavata* exalts *bhakti* to mean service to God motivated by an intense love based on unconditional devotion and faith. In fact, *Śraddhā*, or faith, as opposed to pure intellectual knowledge, is the corner-stone of *bhakti*. However, psychologically, the path of devotion does not eliminate the need of knowledge. The true devotee does not forget that the Supreme Truth is one and non-dual in character. Faith appears when there is an inner conviction in the mind—a conviction that may defy the laws of formal logic and reason. To the man of faith God is Love and Happiness. When this conviction transforms one's existence, then it becomes *bhakti*. *Bhakti* is total self-surrender before the Lord. It implies elimination of the individual ego and sublimation of all desires in the worship of the Lord. The mind is exclusively fixed on the object of devotion. The sense of attachment to wealth, status, or any such selfish end is transformed into an attachment for the Deity.

The *Gītā*, with its emphasis on knowledge of the Self or God as the only means to attain liberation (*mokṣa*), has expounded four modes of attaining union with the Divine Self. They are Jñāna Yoga, the path of union through knowledge; Rāja Yoga, the path of realization through meditation and psychic control; Bhakti Yoga, the path of realization through love and devotion; and Karma Yoga, the path of

union through work.¹ The ideal man, therefore, is one who is the embodiment of all virtues—"one who is active as well as meditative, who is full of devotion, and who at the same time possesses knowledge of the Self."²

Of these four *mārgas*, or paths, *bhakti* appeals more fervently to the imagination of the people. *Bhakti* as a mode of attaining the Supreme Truth has had a tremendous influence on the philosophy, religion and culture of India. An ordinary man finds it difficult to focus his attention on an abstract, intellectual entity. A supreme Being devoid of any shape or attribute is more difficult to meditate on than one with idealised human attributes. Man needs a support for contemplation. In the Upaniṣads the Supreme, or Brahman has been described in two forms. It is called *saprapañca* or *saguna*, or the qualitatif and the determinate. It is also called *niṣprapañca*, or *nirguna*, the qualitless, indeterminate and indescribable. The *saguna* has been termed the *apara-Brahman*, or *Īśvara*, and the *nirguna*, *para-Brahman* or the Absolute. The impersonal aspect of *Īśvara* is the Absolute. It is the *saguna* or personal aspect of the Absolute that finds its most glorious manifestation in the revelation of the Divine form of Krishna to Arjuna in the *Gītā*. The *Bhāgavata*'s emphasis on a

1. Swami Prabhavananda, *The Spiritual Heritage of India* (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore) p. 98.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 99.

personal God who can be realized through devotion is the theme of Bhakti poetry. Krishna's injunction to Arjuna is:

Not by the Vedas nor by austerity,
Nor by gifts or acts of worship
Can I be seen in such a guise.

But by unswerving devotion can
I in such a guise, Arjuna,
Be known and seen in very truth,
And entered into, scorcher of the foes.

Doing My work, intent on Me,
Devoted to Me, free from attachment,
Free from enmity to all beings,
Who is so, goes to Me, O son of Pāṇḍu.³

In the *Bhāgavata*, service to the Lord and surrender to Him out of selfless and transcendent love is bhakti. Bhakti is the madness of divine love whereby the devotee merges in the Lord. So his state can be described as one of eternal bliss. Bhakti involves a fullness of being in which the dualistic concept of Nara-nārāyaṇa, or I and Thou, blends into the One of holistic consciousness. The ontic merges with the ontological and creates sense of divine rapture and aesthetic pleasure. The ecstasy of bhakti is transformed into exquisite music and song of the bhakti poets. The attitudes of reverence, love, submission, separation, fulfilment and so on are expressed spontaneously by these mystic poets. In finding ways to express their love for God, they make their surrender complete. The bhakti poets thought of God as their parent, friend, disciple, guru, lover and beloved. This intensely personal trait, where all the existing human relationships in this world are sublimated into a divine love directed

towards God, is the predominant tone of bhakti poetry.

Śaṅkara in his *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* described bhakti as a relentless search of one's own nature and the truth of one's self. In his *Śivānanda Lahari* he states, "Just as the *āṅkola* seed is attracted to the stem, the needle to the magnet, the virtuous wife to her lord, the creeper to the tree, the river to the ocean, if the mind is drawn towards Śiva's holy feet and dwells there, that is called bhakti."⁴

The *rāsālīlā* of Lord Krishna in the *Bhāgavata* depicts an aspect of *parā bhakti*. God's grace is showered on those who consecrate their self to Him in an ecstasy of devotional rapture. The *Gītā* has its doctrine of *prapatti*, or absolute surrender, depicted in these lines of Krishna: "Lay down all duties, in Me take refuge, fear no longer, for I will save you from sin and bondage."⁵

Rāmānuja, the brilliant exponent of *Viśiṣṭādvaita*, advocated the cultivation of a mental attitude of complete and unqualified surrender (*prapatti*) for attaining self-realization and liberation. His God is no longer the abstract, pure Being of Brahmanism, but a divinity with the sublime qualities of goodness, mercy and beauty. When a devotee sings the praises of Keśava, lets his mind dwell on Śrīdhara, worships Him with his hands, listens to His stories with his ears, sees the Lord's beauty with his eyes, prostrates before Him, smells the holy *tulsi* on His feet, and bends his head in reverence to Him, then is born the spirit of bhakti.⁶ (*Mukunda-Mālā*.)

3. The Bhagavad Gita in *Hinduism*, Ed., Louis Renou (London: Prentice Hall International, 1961) pp. 137-38.

4. *Indian Inheritance: Literature, Philosophy and Religion*, Edited by K.M. Munshi, R.R. Diwakar (Bombay: Bharatitya Vidya Bhavan, 1959) pp. 69-70.

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 71-72.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 72.

Needless to say, the *Bhāgavata* became a powerful factor in the spread of the cult of bhakti all over India. Richard Lannoy observes that "...the progressive refinement of irrational psychic intervention in the cult of bhakti led not only to cultural expression of a high order but also to social changes which profoundly affected the course of Indian history."⁷

Historically, bhakti poetry is one of the chief agents of social fusion. The bhakti movement emerged in the South chiefly among the non-Brahmin classes. Its appeal was to the emotion, and to the concept of social equality. The God of the *Gītā* is Viṣṇu or His incarnation Krishna. Bhakti sects devoted to Śiva arose later, but both Vaiṣṇavism and Śaivism influenced each other. Bhakti poetry arose in the 6th and 7th century with the composition of Tamil hymns by the Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava saints. Rāmānuja provided a universal ethic which cut across caste lines by advocating a theological basis for spiritual love. In the fourteenth century the cult of bhakti became a powerful force stimulating an intensely devotional attitude towards the God, more especially towards Sri Krishna. Poets like Madhva, Rāmānanda, Kabir, Vallabha, Caitanya, Tulsidas, Tukārām, and Nānak developed various aspects of the bhakti movement.

The bhakti movement was in the nature of a protest against the established formal structure of Hinduism. It did not believe that religion is something that one is born with or into. It was revolt against what may be termed as the Great Tradition of the Vedas—Vedic ritual, caste hierarchy and pan-Indian deities; and the Little Tradition of the local *Purāṇas*—local sacrificial rites,

sects, cults and regional deities.⁸ The bhakti cult had a natural distaste for the rigid and inflexible modes of formal worship as found in these Traditions to propitiate the God; they appeared to amount to a demeaning bargain with God for spiritual salvation. Bhakti is total, selfless surrender to the Lord, and God's grace, or *kṛpā*, cannot be forced. The spontaneity of worship that is characteristic of the bhakti movement transcended the barriers of social hierarchies and even religious differences, creating a bond of emotional integration among the people. The unity of the Indian people to a large extent is the result of this emotional integration. Bhakti poetry dealt with both the *saguṇa* and *nirguṇa* attributes of the Absolute.

For instance, Kabir's worship of the Absolute is in its *nirguṇa* form. The adopted son of a Muslim weaver, Kabir spread the gospel of love and denounced vehemently the beliefs of the orthodox. His poems are simple, and their devotional fervour is illustrated in these lines⁹:

For me, the Name of the Lord is True;
What attachment have I to this world?
Not for a moment the Beloved forsakes
me;
Nor I can leave the Dear one.

I am in Love with Him
There is no restlessness for me;
Intoxicated with love, dispel thou the
duality from thy heart.

Delicate is the path thou has to tread;
Why then carry a heavy burden on the
head?—so asks Kabir.

7. Richard Lannoy, *The Speaking Tree: A Study of Indian Culture and Society* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1971) p. 205.

8. "Introduction", *Speaking of Siva*, Trans, A.K. Ramanujan (New York: Penguin Books, 1973) p. 34.

9. Bankey Behari, *Sufis, Mystics & Yogis of India* (Bombay: Bharatitya Vidya Bhavan, 1962) p. 227.

True religion consists in understanding the 'Lord within one's heart'. To these poets, religion was the religion of the soul unencumbered by dogmas and rituals. The bhakti poet was a visionary and a seer. Bhakti poetry stimulated the soul more than the intellect. The message it gave was the message of life, of faith, of hope. The bhakti poet was a mystic of a high order. He was one who revealed his own self-realization so that others could transcend the limitations of their finite self to attain a state of bliss. Such devotional poetry gave rise to that intellectual perception which was needed to purify one's emotion and bring about a harmony within one's self.

The spiritual renaissance that took place in India in the 14th century was non-ritualistic, based on bhakti. Though bhakti emphasized theism, it also reflected the monotheism of Islam. It is the Supreme God that the bhakta is asked to adore and worship for salvation. However, bhakti poetry is not monotheistic in the exclusive sense, for the devotees can worship the same Supreme Being under other names. Krishna or Śiva or Devī, they all symbolize the One and the Eternal. Another popular feature of bhakti poetry was that it was written in the vernacular and regional dialects as opposed to the use of Sanskrit in formal texts. The bhakti poets were drawn from every strata of social class. In fact, India's oneness is to a large extent based on emotional integration.

The essence of bhakti poetry can be contemporized today as we move towards the 21st century. Bhakti poetry, by revealing the essential unity of all things, can free the individual soul from the bondage of misery and despair. The prevailing tendency is to try finding an answer to one's mental sufferings in the outside world through either a political, or a social, or an economic revolution. The problem of a split personality remains. Under the guise of reason and

insight, "the rules of social communication often contain contradiction which lead to impossible dilemmas in thought, feeling and action."¹⁰ This results in a confusing and impoverished view of one's role or identity, creating feelings of isolation, loneliness and alienation. The crisis of human existence is due to man's distorted and divided psyche. The situation is further aggravated when one attempts to escape from these neuroses in "...the socially permissible orgies of mass entertainment, religious fanaticism, chronic sexual titillation, alcoholism, war—the whole sad list of tedious and barbarous escapes."¹¹

The reason for this gradual mental degradation is obvious. With scientific knowledge and increasing technical progress, 'man's individuality appears to have been submerged under the dictates of a machine-ruled world. Science has effectively created a world from which real development of the human psyche is excluded. As Jung observes, "Scientific education is based in the main on statistical truths and abstract knowledge and therefore imparts an unrealistic, rational picture of the world, in which the individual, as a merely marginal phenomenon, plays no role."¹² The ever-widening chasm between faith and knowledge is symptomatic of a class of people who as rationalists feel "...impelled to criticize contemporary religion as literalistic, narrow-minded and obsolescent."¹³ The spontaneous and instinctive nature of man is inevitably erased, and it plunges "...civilized man into the conflict between conscious and uncon-

10. Allan Watts, *Psychotherapy East & West* (New York: Random, 1975) p. 9.

11. *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

12. C.G. Jung, *The Undiscovered Self*, Trans. R.F.C. Hull (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958) p. 12.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 72.

scious, spirit and nature, knowledge and faith, a split that becomes pathological the moment his consciousness is no longer able to negate or suppress his instinctual side."¹⁴ The remedy lies in the application of an unconventional mode of psycho-therapy leading to an integrated development of the spirit. It is here that faith can replace the cold intellectuality of our modern consciousness. The concept of bhakti, or devotion to the Lord, can be of practical value. The faith of a devotee can strengthen his mind because he is secure in the knowledge that his God is there to protect him. This may sound idealistic, but more miracles have been

14. *Ibid.*, p. 81.

wrought through faith than we could have ever dreamt of. With emotional and psychic integration, man's attitude to life itself would be composed of an awareness that is based on self-knowledge and self-realization. With a unified consciousness, a more moral and spiritually uplifting mode of existence can solve the problems of man's fragmented existence. It is only the bond of love, which is generally misunderstood, that can bring about an inner cohesion and integration in our society. Seen in this light, bhakti can be of immense social value. For the man of faith and devotion the whole world is one. His gospel is the gospel of universal love, and his aim is the achievement of true, inner happiness for all.



Madhusudana Saraswati on the Bhagavad-Gita

(Continued from page 90)

by me'. Thus, all the 'bodies' that are within the range of controversy have the same (Entity as their) enjoyer, because they are 'bodies' like your body. There is also the Upaniṣadic text:

The same Deity remains hidden in all beings, and is all-pervasive and the indwelling Self of all beings.⁴

From the establishment of eternality and all-pervasiveness of the Self are controverted all

those views, viz. of the followers of the Cārvākas, who say that the body alone is the Self; of some of them, that (the Self is constituted by) organs, the mind and the vital force; of the Buddhists, that It is momentary consciousness; of the Jāinas, that It is different from the body, changeless and has the same dimension as the body; and of some of them, that It is eternal and minute since that (Self) having an intermediate dimension cannot be permanent.

4. *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*, 6.11.



In the light of our present knowledge, man's most comprehensive aim is seen not as mere survival, not as numerical increase, not as increased complexity of organization or increased control over his environment, but as greater fulfilment—the fuller realization of more possibilities by the human species collectively and more of its component members individually.

—Sir Julian Huxley in *Evolution after Darwin*, The University of Chicago Centennial, Vol. I, *The Evolution of Life*, page 20.

First Speech of Vivekananda—A Look Back

B. N. SIKDAR

A creative writer looks back, giving an analysis of Swamiji's first speech at the Parliament of Religions. Sri Sikdar is a Research-Fellow at the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Gol Park, Calcutta 700 029.

The first step in Vivekananda's campaign in the West was not a step, it was a speech—simple, brief, stirring. Consisting of about 450 words, a dozen or so sentences, it should not have taken more than fifteen minutes to deliver. In public speaking Vivekananda had little training or practice. Never before had there been an occasion for him to speak in English to thousands of foreigners, men and women, young or old. It must have been a trial for one who had arrived only eight weeks before in a land ten thousand miles away from home. Later in a letter to Alasinga, he wrote of the severe strain he was then under.¹ The strain was perhaps made more acute by his awareness that on his performance depended the realization of his dream—to found a mission which would bring help and uplift to the stricken millions in India.

On the platform where the delegates sat were two 'giant marble statues of Cicero and Demosthenes some twenty-five feet apart.'² If the organizers of the Convention led by the Reverend John Barrows had chosen to place the likenesses of the two master orators of ancient times, there must have been good reason for it: They wished the deliberations to go on in the spirit of these two giants in the history of oratory.

Demosthenes' strength lay in his simplicity of language and holy enthusiasm; a keen perception of truth hidden in contradictory sets of evidence, and fidelity to fact was Cicero's *forte*. The delegates and the more enlightened among the audience could not have missed the significance of the symbolism of those marble figures.

Facing Vivekananda was one of the finest assemblies seen in modern times: an immense crowd of a mixed stock, manly and generous, and volatile. Carl Sandburg (*Chicago Poems*, 1916) has celebrated the poetry of Chicago's working class culture; its brutality and greed are the stuff of which the novels of W.D. Howells, Upton Sinclair and Frank Norris are made. Descendants of New Englanders—i.e., of Germans, Jews, Irishmen, and Scandinavians—the Chicagoans, unlike their cousins on the other side of the Atlantic, were not the reticent type. They could treat one hospitably, but also roughly if one happened to rub them the wrong way. They weren't the type who could be carried away by flowery words. On the contrary, their minds were very sensitive and open to any fresh idea. Keeping cool under provocation was not in their temperament. Roused to enthusiasm they could be hilarious; when offended they could also be vehement in denunciation. Such was most of the audience Vivekananda faced that day. The situation could hardly have been more challenging.

1. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1989) Vol. 5, p. 20.

2. M.L. Burke, *Swami Vivekananda in the West—New Discoveries* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1983) Vol. 1, p. 75.

(Please turn over)

II

Sisters and Brothers of America..... five simple words, and with ease Swami Vivekananda had won the hearts of those present! Inspiration is but another name for power—above-normal gained suddenly from the breath or spirit of God, as Wordsworth has suggested (*The Recluse*, Bk.I). Vivekananda lets three calls to speak go by, comes the fourth and a sudden genius seems to awaken in him; he bursts into a flight of oratory that completely carries the day.

It is our misfortune that when Vivekananda delivered this speech and others, video-recording was unknown. Not even could his performance be recorded on film. The phonograph was then in its infancy. To assess someone fairly as a good speaker it is necessary to actually see and hear him. 'The orator must suit the action to the word, the word to the action' (Cicero, 'Brutus Oration'). 'Deconum', according to the *Rhetorica Herennium*, is a very important factor in public speaking. Facial expressions, the wagging finger, the waving arms, the modulation of tone, and other dramatic gestures are what make a speech effective. The Elder Pitt, a great orator, was a consummate actor. About Vivekananda we only know that he had a resonant, musical voice, glowing bright eyes, an impressively broad forehead and a large nose. To judge by portraits, the lower features of his face resembled those of Charles Fox whose passion for a cause he shared. The rest we have to imagine.

The first simple words in Vivekananda's preamble are in fact informal, though spoken on a formal occasion. The hall bursts into applause and compels him to pause. The words penetrate to the core the heart of every hearer and they break down the barrier between the platform and the chairs, between East and West, black and white, Christian and Hindu. The standing ovation

he receives is the measure of his success.

The preamble (*pronuntio*, as classical rhetoricians call it) makes out these points:

1. There is an ancient order of monks in India, and Vivekananda belongs to it;
2. The speaker's religion is 'the mother of all religions' and as such holds all religions dear (as a mother does her children, even the most homely);
3. There are 'millions and millions of Hindu people of all classes and sects', and Vivekananda in addressing the assembly is acting as their spokesman.

In less than a minute Vivekananda has given the audience certain facts about India and himself, in clear cogent terms. He combines Cicero's *exordium* and *narratio*.

The core of the 'Response to Welcome' is in the second part: 'We believe not only in Universal toleration, *but accept all religions as true*', which is the essence of his guru's teachings, the central theme of Sri Ramakrishna's teachings. This part opens with an insightful expansion of the idea of *toleration* contained in the speeches of some delegates on the platform, '...who, referring to the delegates from the Orient, have told you that these men from far-off nations may well claim the honour of bearing to different lands the idea of toleration'. 'Toleration and fraternity' were indeed the watchwords of the Convention. Vivekananda enriched them by saying that Hinduism (of Sri Ramakrishna) not only tolerates but *accepts* all religions as true. Through words like *sheltering.....fostering*, the motherfigure is suggested again and again. In the 'I am proud to' phrases reiterated, we seem actually to hear Swamiji's booming voice. It is a superordinate expression presiding over a series of subordinate clauses indicating reasons for which the speaker is proud. It is a kind of *anaphora*: 'We believe.....we

accept', 'Universal toleration.....all religions as true.' 'Isocolon' is a figure of thought which uses clauses or phrases of equal length to add force by contrasting each other as in antithesis. The sentence also counters the thoughts already advanced by the preceding speakers (*refutatio* or *reprehensio*). References to the history of Hebrew and Zoroastrian refugees constitutes the *confirmatio*. Very artfully and naturally Vivekananda quotes in this connexion a hymn (*Śiva-mahimna-stotra*) to illustrate the truth of his submission.

The third part of the speech is more animated, and reveals more of Vivekananda's leonine powers. There is another quotation from the *Gīta* imbedded in it. Philosophy, argument, passion, are fused together in a language which grows more rhythmic because the speaker is working toward a perorative climax. The sentences roll out in rhythm, the pauses and stops are nicely balanced: They have filled the earth with violence, drenched it often and often

with human blood....But their time is come; and I fervently hope that the bell that tolled this morning....' Aristotle said to his pupils who had come to hear him on the art of oratory, 'Your language will be *appropriate* if it expresses emotion and character, and if it corresponds to its subject. "Correspondence to subject" means that we must neither speak casually about weighty matters, nor solemnly about trivial ones' (*Rhetoric*, Book 3, 'Amplification and Climax', Chapters 7, 10).

Through this oration Vivekananda leapt into fame, but it is not his best. It is simple and straightforward, and its structure is based on parallelism and reiteration. On the whole its impact on the Chicagoans was tremendous, which is the true measure of an orator's success. Within the brief compass of just about 450 words, Vivekananda, having awakened the Chicagoans' interest, excited their emotions, fixed their attention, and swept them off their feet by the sweep and roll of his words.



Ideal Behind Ramakrishna Mission Activities

(Continued from page 91)

out our salvation by means of these activities.

I need not deal at length with the ideas and ideals set before us by Sri Ramakrishna, and following him, Swamiji. Every year we discuss these aspects. We are mainly placing before you the report of the work that has been done. But the ideal behind that has to be remembered. The work we do has to be evaluated only by its spiritual content without which it has no meaning for an organization like ours which is out and out spiritual. I hope we shall be able to carry on our work with this ideal behind it. Then

alone shall we be happy that we have deserved the blessings of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother and Swamiji.

I conclude with my prayer to Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother and Swamiji that their blessings may be always on us. May we remember that their principles are ever to be kept before us. With our loyalty to them we shall be able to fulfil the demands that are made on our Organization from the public and people in need. May we be able to carry on without budging from the ideal.



Meeting Vivekananda

RICHARD PRESCOTT

The man Vivekananda, as a phenomenon within nature, is born and dies, but Vivekananda as the Self is never born and never dies. The author-devotee, who is of Edmonds, Washington, U.S.A., ponders over this great paradox.

It is meant to be a universal experience, free of all exclusivity. Narendra, that is Swami Vivekananda, may indeed be one perfect human being. Nothing is questionable in his life and character. He is a shining star in the firmament of humanity. Certainly he would object to my calling him perfect, for he was a human man. A man that I shall not meet in this world. A curious thing.

'Great saints are the object-lessons of the Principle. But the disciples make the saint the Principle, and then they forget the Principle in the person,' Swamiji has stated. Who indeed was he, this Thread Bearer of the *Ātmā*-Principle throughout the world? Though Swamiji's human body has dropped like a sere leaf from the tree of *Samsāra*, how shall one now meet the Self of Vivekananda? The Divine Mother moves Her Wonders.

'We ourselves—this is the greatest mystery of the universe,' Swamiji has declared. Within this mystery is the sweet bliss. Let me quote again, 'The man Swami Vivekananda is in nature, is born and dies; but the Self which we see as Swami Vivekananda is never born and never dies. It is the eternal and unchangeable Reality.' That is the excellent meaning of real meeting. Experience is the only teacher. This is to awaken the Lion (*Brahman*) within one's own self. This is *Svastha*, to 'stand on the Self'.

Yet, the natural response of self doubt

comes up in its course, 'Oh, but I never met Vivekananda.' There are many who have not met him, the person, yet there are those who have met him in Principle. It makes one wonder why the Divine Mother did not bring all the best souls to Dakshineswar to see Ramakrishna or guide them to contact Swamiji in his world travels. Though many did, one can only say that the Divine Mother has Her Own Wishes.

So, how shall you and I now meet the Reality of Swami Vivekananda? The *Vedāntic* sentiments and perceptions of Walt Whitman are well known. But there is another, the poet Lord Alfred Tennyson, whose life was contemporary with that of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother and Swamiji, though he never met them. Tennyson had a curious practice, but let me set the stage with something Swamiji said, 'He can experience the Absolute; the man Vivekananda can resolve himself into the Absolute and then come back to the man again.' There you have it. Now let us recall the poet's technique of recognition...

'A kind of waking trance I have frequently had, quite up from boyhood, when I have been all alone. This has often come upon me through repeating my own name to myself silently till, all at once, as it were, out of the intensity of the consciousness of individuality, the individuality itself seemed to dissolve and fade away into boundless being; and this is not a confused state, but the clearest of the clearest, the surest of the

surest, the weirdest of the weirdest, utterly beyond words, where death was an almost laughable impossibility, the loss of personality (if so it were) seemed no extinction, the only true life.' (Tennyson.)

Very interesting. This most definitely reminds one of *mantra*-practice, such as that of *Mahā-Bīja* OM, whose recitation can bring one to *Turīya*-Consciousness, the 'boundless being', transcendent, yet immanent within the three states, waking, dream and dreamless sleep. One becomes sure of Self, clear in Self, beyond description, able to laugh at death. Knowing this experience is only weird in reference to the relative world. As Swamiji put it, 'and then we shall see, and hear, and feel things which men in the three ordinary states (viz., waking, dream and sleep) neither feel nor see, nor hear. Then we shall speak a strange language, as it were, and the world will not understand us, because it does not know anything but the senses.' There you have it!

This is the *Atma-Brahman*, the Undivided Infinite Self Reality, individual and universal. As Swamiji put it in his book, *Rāja Yoga*, 'He is the Teacher of even the ancient teachers, being not limited by time,' and, 'His manifesting word is OM.' Once again, the real meaning becomes sure and clear. 'Cry for help, and you will get it; and at last you will find that the one crying for help has vanished, and so has the Helper, and the play is over; only the Self remains.'

The Real Self of Swamiji is the Effulgent One. His bold sayings strike off our fetters of preconception. 'You must worship the Self in Krishna, not Krishna as Krishna. Only by worshipping the Self can freedom be won. Even Personal God is but the Self objectified.' 'The highest things are under your feet, because you are Divine Stars; all these things are under your feet. You can

swallow the stars by the handful if you want; such is your real nature. Be strong, get beyond all superstitions, and be free.' 'Christs and Buddhas are but waves on the boundless ocean which I am. Bow down to nothing but your own higher Self.' It was Swamiji's opinion that the Buddha was 'the one absolutely sane man' that the world has ever known. 'The Buddha was not a person, but a realization, and to that, anyone of them might attain. And with his last breath he forbade them to worship any.' How could the Self-Principle be expressed any clearer? In some way one might see the person, the human being, even though he is an actual soul, as a divine metaphor and spiritual symbol of the Principle. In the very same way that the real Buddha is the *Tathāgata* (Suchness) and not a human being. To see otherwise is really to miss the mark of what this *Tathāgata*-Principle truly is a fact.

When one gets over the limitations of all historic traditions and dives into the Boundless, then it becomes all too clear. As the lucid mind of Vivekananda has made it so, 'If there are men teachers, god teachers, or angel teachers, they are all limited; who was the teacher before them? We are forced to admit, as a last conclusion, one teacher who is not limited by time; and that One Teacher of infinite knowledge, without beginning or end, is called God.'

This is why Swami Vivekananda created the Advaita Ashrama in the Himalayas, high above the superstitious world. To keep the Advaitic Principle of Truth ever free of fear. As he himself wrote,

'In Whom is the Universe, Who is in the Universe, Who is the Universe; in Whom is the Soul, Who is in the Soul, Who is the Soul of Man; knowing Him—and therefore the Universe—as our Self, alone extinguishes all fear, brings an end to misery and leads to Infinite Freedom.

Wherever there has been expansion in love or progress in well-being, of individuals or numbers, it has been through the perception, realization, and the practicalization of the Eternal Truth— THE ONENESS OF ALL BEINGS. "Dependence is misery. Independence is happiness"...

Swamiji will never cease to inspire, 'Do you think that there will be no more Vivekanandas after I die!...each and everyone of them may become a Vivekananda! There will be no lack of Vivekanandas, if the world needs them—thousands and millions of Vivekanandas will appear—from where, who knows!' So it is!



Karma Yoga: Key to All the Yogas

(Continued from page 105)

others. The love he pours out upon all beings is a small reflection of God's love which He pours out upon the whole creation. The

karma yogi becomes God's selfless agent, and through the assiduous cultivation of selflessness he merges completely with God.



Here is a simile.: A man's ignorance is like a tree. The ego is its sprout from which springs up the trunk of attachment, with house and properties as its branches. Wife, children, and relatives are the twigs on which grow the leaves of wealth and crops. Virtue and vice are the flowers; happiness and misery are the fruits. And this tree, which has grown vigorously throughout untold centuries and now blocks the path to liberation, has been watered and nourished by the hypnotic spell of delusion. Desire for sense objects is like a cloud of wild bees swarming around the tree. Their humming lulls those weary souls, engrossed in worldly enjoyment, who take rest in its shade; so there is no hope for their liberation.

On the other hand, those who have sharpened the axe of knowledge on the whetstone of holy company can chop down this tree of ignorance and enter into the quiet, serene park of Brahman, where there is freedom from the thorny plant of craving and the blinding dust of desire. Here all mental waves cease to function, and one attains illumination.

We are not the result of the elements combined with senses. We are the Ātman and beyond māyā. As a fish lives in water yet is different from it, so the Ātman lives in the body but is different from it.

A man, through constant practice of yoga, frees himself from ignorance and attains unitive knowledge. This is called liberation, or mukti. Liberation originates from yoga, and yoga from discriminatory knowledge, discriminatory knowledge from misery, and misery from attachment. Thus the man who seeks liberation must shun all forms of attachment. Nonattachment begets happiness. And as nonattachment arises from discrimination, so the life stream of unitive knowledge is nonattachment.

—Avadhuta Gita of Dattatreya, (Advaita Ashrama: Calcutta, 1984), pp. xxii-xxiii.

PRACTICAL VEDANTA

WHO ARE WORTHY OF RESPECT?

Lord Buddha was delivering a sermon to the eager and pious villagers assembled in the Jethavana Park. Anathapindaka also, one of his disciples and owner of the park, was among the enraptured listeners drinking deep of the Master's words of wisdom. Suddenly he noticed some persons, whom he could not identify, coming towards the gathering. Buddha too saw them and said to Anathapindaka: 'Child, get up! Respectable brahmins are coming this way. Receive them and arrange to have them honourably seated.' Anathapindaka glanced at them and exclaimed, 'Lord! Perhaps you do not know them. Possibly only one among them is a brahmin. Of the rest one may be a kshatriya, another a vaisya, and it is quite likely that the others are untouchables!'

Hearing this the Master smiled forgivingly and said, 'Child! Caste of a person is not determined by his parentage or birth. Qualities, actions, and propensities define one's caste. It is precisely because these persons are angerless, righteous, self-controlled, and given to serving others with unselfish dedication that I consider them brahmins. Know for certain that such as these alone are true brahmins. As a matter of fact, all human beings are sudras at the time of their birth!'

Only later did Anathapindaka come to know that those 'newcomers' were Mahakashyapa Maudgalyayana, Sariputra, Chunda, Devadatta and some others!

News & Reports

THE 84TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION

Synopsis of the Governing Body's Report for 1992-93

The 84th Annual General Meeting of the Ramakrishna Mission was held at Belur Math on Sunday the 19th December, 1993 at 3:30 p.m. Revered Swami Gahanananda, Vice-President of the Ramakrishna Mission was the chairman of the proceedings. A synopsis of the report of the Governing Body for 1992-93, placed before the members is given below. The report has stated the statistical data about the Ramakrishna Mission activities. By way of additional information it has given a brief outline of the activities of the Ramakrishna Math also.

MOTTO

The Motto behind the activities of the Ramakrishna Math and the Ramakrishna Mission is "*Ātmano Mokṣārtham Jagaddhitāya ca*" i.e. "for one's own liberation and for the welfare of the world." This is the essence of the *Sanātana Dharma* (Eternal Religion) viewed in the light of the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna. To give a practical shape to this idea, Swami Vivekananda founded the Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission.

CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

The centenary of Swami Vivekananda's *Bhārat Parikramā* (1892-1992) was celebrated in most of our centres in India with public meetings, processions, seminars, recitation, elocution, drawing and other competitions, music festivals, sports meets, exhibitions, conventions for students, teachers and other youth, dramas and a variety of other programmes. In rural areas too a number of programmes were held. It was heartening to note the overwhelming response of the public, in particular the youth.

The centenary celebrations of Swami Vivekananda's participation in the Chicago Parliament of Religions is being celebrated throughout India and in several other countries. The Central Committee formed for this purpose organized a Parliament of Religions at Calcutta in which more than 12,000 delegates participated. The function was a resounding success. A comprehensive report will find a place in the report for the next year after the conclusion of the celebrations.

ACTIVITIES

Relief and Rehabilitation: In the year under report the *Ramakrishna Mission* undertook extensive relief and rehabilitation work—*Distress Relief* in Rajasthan and in Moscow, *Drought Relief* in Bihar and Maharashtra, *Disturbance Relief* in West Bengal, Maharashtra and Assam, *Flood Relief* in Purulia (West Bengal), *Earthquake Relief* in Uttarakashi, *Fire Relief* in Bankura, *Medical Relief* in West Bengal, *Tornado Relief* in Murshidabad, *Winter Relief* in West Bengal, and *Rehabilitation Projects* in the districts of Uttarakashi, Purulia and Jalpaiguri, spending a sum of Rs. 44.97 lakhs. Besides, relief articles worth about Rs. 6.72 lakhs were distributed. *Primary Relief* was conducted in India (benefitting more than 66,000 people) and in Bangladesh.

During the same period the *Ramakrishna Math* conducted *Flood Relief* in Gujarat, Kerala and Tamil Nadu, *Cyclone and Fire Relief* in Orissa, *Drought Relief* in Gujarat and *Disturbance Relief* in Gujarat and Assam. *Rehabilitation work* was carried out at Rameswaram in Tamil Nadu. In all a sum of Rs. 3.44 lakhs was spent for the purpose.

Welfare Activity: The Mission spent a sum of Rs. 1.31 crores by way of providing scholarships and stipends to a large number of students, medical aid to poor patients,

monetary help to aged and destitute people and sanitation facilities to thousands of poor families in rural areas. The slum rehousing project at Rambagan in Calcutta and the massive sanitation project in the Midnapore District in West Bengal deserve very special mention. This was in addition to the huge sums spent by our educational institutions for the benefit of poor students and by our hospitals and dispensaries for the treatment of poor patients.

Medical Services: The *Mission* did commendable work through its 9 hospitals with 1,606 beds (50,949 in-patients and 18,94,565 out-patients), 62 out-patient dispensaries (19,27,025 cases) and 17 mobile dispensaries (5,73,287 cases) spending a sum of about Rs. 8.61 crores.

Under the *Math* centres, there were 5 hospitals with 358 beds serving 12,223 in-patients and 1,92,428 out-patients, 24 dispensaries (6,78,169 cases) and 7 mobile dispensaries (1,49,782 cases).

The *Mission* and the *Math* centres conducted several free eye-camps and camps for orthopaedic, dental and other patients. The *Mission* conducted a medical camp at Triveni Sangam during Magh Mela, a TB Sanatorium at Ranchi, a TB clinic at New Delhi, 4 Nurses' Training centres (Seva Pratishthan, Vrindaban, Itanagar and Lucknow), and 2 old age homes. The *Math* conducted one old age home at Barisha and a nurses' training centre at Thiruvananthapuram.

Educational Work: Through its educational institutions of various types the *Mission* aimed at imparting man-making and character-building education. True to the tradition, the academic results of the *Mission's* educational institutions were also brilliant. In 1992-93 the *Mission* had 5 degree colleges, 4 teachers' training colleges, 5 junior basic training institutes, 10 higher secondary schools, 30 secondary schools,

131 schools of different grades, 4 polytechnics, 7 junior technical and industrial schools, 83 hostels and students' homes, 5 orphanages, 2 institutes of agriculture, 1 school of languages, 1 computer centre, 1 blind boys' academy, 1 librarianship training centre, 4 rural development training institutes, and 6,769 non-formal educational centres, night schools and the like. The total number of students in all these institutions was 1,68,581 of whom 62,711 were girls. The *Mission* spent a sum of Rs. 28.19 crores for this purpose.

Under the *Math* centres 7,485 students were taught in 1 B.Ed. college, 1 Sanskrit college, 1 school of languages, and in a total of 29 schools, students' homes and other educational institutions.

Spread of Spiritual and Cultural Ideas: This was accomplished through a large number of libraries and reading rooms, lectures and seminars, films of religious and cultural value, regular classes, public celebrations, occasional exhibitions, etc. The publication departments of the *Math* and the *Mission* centres did appreciable work in this regard. The *Math* centres maintained temples, organized lectures, retreats and devotees' meets. Thousands of people were inspired to accept higher values of life by coming into contact with the different *Math* and *Mission* centres.

Work in Rural and Tribal Areas: Rural and tribal welfare work has come to occupy a prominent place in the scheme of services rendered by the *Mission*. With its limited funds and workers, the *Mission* has been doing its utmost for serving the poor and backward people as also tribal people in different parts of the country. This is accomplished in three ways:

- (a) through our centres located in rural and tribal areas primarily set up for this purpose;
- (b) through our urban centres. which

have taken up development projects in rural and tribal areas, and,
(c) through our educational and medical institutions in urban areas where rural folk form a significant percentage of the beneficiaries.

The *Mission* spent a sum of about Rs. 3.36 crores specially for rural and tribal development work, apart from the huge expenditure incurred by the educational and medical institutions located in rural and tribal areas.

The rural development training institutes at Narendrapur, Narainpur, Saradapitha (Belur) as also the Krishi Vigyan Kendra and Divyayan at Ranchi (Morabadi) trained youth for work in rural and tribal areas in modern methods of agriculture, dairy and poultry farming, etc. The centre at Ranchi (Morabadi) has taken up massive rural development project by way of extension and follow-up of the training programmes of Divyayan. The centre at Narendrapur is conducting numerous integrated rural development projects in several districts of West Bengal. The centres at Cherrapunjee, Shillong, Along, Narottam Nagar, Itanagar, and Narainpur have won the love and esteem of the tribal people of the respective areas for their educational and medical work. There was further advancement in the extensive tribal welfare projects undertaken by the Narainpur centre in the Abujmarh area of Bastar district, Madhya Pradesh. The centre in Bombay continued its comprehensive rural development project at Sakwar with vocational training, medical service and other programmes.

The *Math* centres at Bangalore and Mysore undertook integrated rural development projects. *Math* centres of rural and tribal areas also conducted medical and educational service activities.

Under the *Pallimangal* activities of the

Headquarters, a pilot project, initiated in 1980, continued in 17 villages in and around Kamarpukur and Jayrambati in West Bengal, conducting soil analysis, training for destitute women in weaving and rolling of incense stick, training in spinning in mini jute mills and medical services including eye-camps.

The statistics relating to these institutions are already included in the statistics under 'Medical service' and 'Educational work.'

Foreign Work: The *Mission* centres in France, Switzerland, Mauritius, Singapore, Fiji and Sri Lanka carried on cultural work in addition to spiritual ministration. Some educational work was also conducted by a few of them.

In the *Math* centres in Argentina, Canada, Japan, Netherlands, United Kingdom and the United States of America our Swamis gave lectures at the centres and also in colleges, universities, etc. on invitation, conducted religious classes, observed religious festivals with special worship, organized seminars and held retreats. Some of them also brought out useful publications on philosophical subjects and spiritual teachings.

The 8 *Math* and 8 *Mission* centres in Bangladesh were engaged in conducting religious classes, discourses, daily worship and prayer, dispensaries, schools, students' homes, libraries and relief work such as distribution of milk, clothing, etc.

During the reporting period a *Mission* centre was started each at Port Blair in Andaman and at Sikra-Kulingram in West Bengal. Including these newly added centres and excluding the Headquarters at Belur Math, the *Mission* and the *Math* had 79 and 76 branches respectively, in India and abroad.

